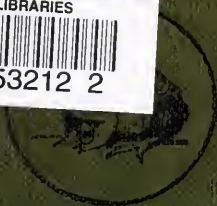


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ALL
FOR THE
LOVE
OF
LADDIE









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All for the Love of Laddie

Written for
Children and those who Love them

SCENE—God's Out-of-Doors

TIME—From Spring to Autumn

AIM

Perfection : Mental, Moral, and Physical

By

C. Y. and H. W. Douglass

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Illustrated
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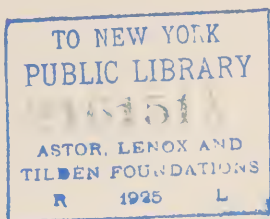
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BY
C. Y. DOUGLASS
AND
H. W. DOUGLASS

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"Do animals and trees really talk?"

No, of course not; at least, not to you who ask the question. But to some of us—we hope the most of us—the query is an idle one. All things living speak to us, for we have learned to follow the rules—we listen carefully and watch closely. We also love much, and constantly endeavor to keep our souls in perfect attune.

And the King with his golden sceptre,
The Pope with Saint Peter's key,
Can never unlock the one little heart
That is opened only to me.
For I am Lord of a Realm,
And I am Pope of a See;
Indeed I'm supreme in the kingdom
That is sitting, just now, on my knee.

C. H. WEBB.

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“Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough!
In youth it sheltered me,
And I’ll protect it now.”

GEORGE PERKINS MORRIS.



Time is never wasted listening to the trees;
If to heaven as grandly we arose as these,
Holding to each other half the kindly grace
Haply we were worthier of our human place.

LUCY LARCOM.

THE GIANT

IT was when Laddie was eight years old that a family conclave was held over him. This gathering consisted of Daddie, Mother Dear, and the family doctor, who had started Laddie on life's road and thus felt his responsibility. This doctor was an old, old man—or so it seemed to Laddie—for he could remember away back when Daddie and Mother Dear were but little children. He had also watched them grow up, fall in love, marry, and start a home of their own. And then, after a few years, had come Laddie—the fulfillment of all their dreams.

The newcomer had not been much to look at, to be sure; for he was very tiny in those early days. But by constant care and watchfulness this much beloved bit of humanity had gradually developed into a gentle, lovable child. Yet, in spite of the Old Doctor's advice and wisdom, he still remained but a frail lad, with but a frail hold on life.

And now he was eight, when boys should be

busy in school and at play. But Laddie had been considered too delicate for public-school life, so Mother Dear had taken him in hand; and Mother Dear, as a teacher as well as a mother, could not be excelled. A schoolroom had been pronounced too confining, and so as many as possible of the lessons had been given out-of-doors, and in those lessons many things besides books had had their place—but still Laddie had barely held his own.

And this winter a slight operation, long postponed, had been performed in his throat, from which he had recovered very slowly. Naturally they were all much worried. The Old Doctor, while waiting for Daddie and Mother Dear to join him, rapidly reviewed all these facts, and decided to suggest a new line of treatment for the lad.

They were just seating themselves comfortably when Dickum walked boldly into the room. Indeed why shouldn't he be present when his beloved master was to be discussed and grave decisions were to be reached? You see Dickum, too, was eight years old, and had been brought here in the Old Doctor's pocket, as soon as his eyes were open, as a plaything for Laddie. They had been inseparable ever since. They had slept

together, eaten together—or at least Dickum had received many choice bits from Laddie's plate—played together, and studied together. Of course Dickum's progress in lessons was not as swift as Laddie's, but he was a very attentive pupil, always sitting up straight by his master's side; and when Mother Dear's lessons sometimes seemed hard and dull, it had always encouraged Laddie to remember that what was hard for him was harder yet for Dickum.

But if Dickum had not learned to read and write, he had learned to be wise in dog-knowledge—so wise, in fact, that he had often been declared almost human. Truly Dickum was an important member of the family. And now, sensing something in the atmosphere that he in his dog-wisdom connected with his little master, he determined, if there was to be a discussion, to have his say, too, in the matter—and his claim was never questioned by the others.

And so Dickum, with hair like satin and so white the pink skin beneath could easily be seen, with one black mark on his forehead and another on the under side of his neck, his pointed face alive with intelligence and his beautiful brown eyes filled with love, after walking up to each one by way of greeting—for he was ever polite—

stretched himself on a rug in the center of the room, and they were now all ready to begin.

The Old Doctor commenced abruptly: "Well, I have been giving this matter much thought and I have decided he must be taken away, just as soon as it is warm enough to risk it."

"But that cannot possibly be before the middle of June, and even then it is very cool at the seashore," protested Mother Dear.

"Who said anything about the seashore?" the Old Doctor demanded. "This time he is going to the country. Every summer of his life we have sent Laddie to seaside places, thinking he would outgrow his weakness; but we have not hit it yet, for the child has become no stronger. Not that he is any worse," he hastened to add, "but neither is he any better. He seems to have no power of resistance. No, sir! It's the country for him this summer. Let's see! This is March. I think in another month or six weeks it will be perfectly safe to start."

"But where shall we go?" asked Daddie, helplessly. "Of course we will try anything that promises health and strength for the lad, but the country is so large I have no idea where to look for a suitable place."

"Well, I don't just know where the place is,

but I do know what we want. Now I remember the old farm where I was born. Life on it was often hard and the living meager, but it made me what I am to-day. I have no nerves. I am never sick. I can endure what breaks down many younger men, and I believe it is all due to the healthy, hardy start that I got from country life. I believe it so thoroughly, that I am anxious to try that same life for Laddie. He is too civilized; so take him away from civilization for a while and let him run wild. Here in the city we all do a thing because everyone else is doing it, or we stop doing it because everyone else has stopped. I do not believe city life is good for a child like Laddie. Now then—I should say buy a small farm back in the country somewhere, but get it near enough to New York so you can keep an eye on your business when necessary. Select the farm carefully though, for I want it to have hills, trees, flowers, and a brook, too, if possible. Then fill it with things that Laddie will enjoy watching and learning about, such as cows, horses, bees, and perhaps a lamb—oh, you will find out what will be best later! I said *buy* the farm, for I know just how fond Laddie will soon be of every living thing on the place. Let him own some pigeons and chickens

himself, and of course there must be a cat and kittens. It will all be very new to him and will keep him busy out-of-doors all day long. And that is just what we want. I would even give him some daily tasks to perform. They can be made easy for him; but make him feel from the start that he is a part of the place, and that others are dependent upon him. Also give him a small garden and set him to digging in the dirt. It will do him worlds of good. It may be hard on Mother Dear at first, but I know she will not be lonely long. In fact," and his eyes twinkled merrily, "I think it will be good medicine for all of you."

"Oh, I don't mind for myself!" said Mother Dear. "You know Daddie and I are willing to do anything for our boy, but Laddie would be sure to miss his playmates sorely. If he only had brothers and sisters it would be different; but he has, at least, always had his little friends to amuse him, and it would be very hard for him, I am afraid."

"O pshaw! Dickum will be there, and he is Laddie's best chum. Give the child plenty of pets and turn him loose on the place—and Mother Nature will do the rest. And Mother Nature and Mother Dear are the best com-

bination possible for Laddie, or I am no doctor."

And so Daddie commenced to look for a home. There were many places to be had, but there was always something lacking. Sometimes there was no brook, and sometimes no hills, or perhaps the house itself was undesirable, or it was too far from New York. But at last, after weeks of searching, just the right place was found. It was agreed that all should be settled before saying anything to Laddie, and so it was not until one day early in April that he was told the secret. He loved secrets, and had known for weeks that a big surprise was coming, and had spent much time in trying to guess what it might be. But he had never come near the truth; and how could he, who had never seen a cow, or a bluebird, and who knew what a lamb was like only from one he had once owned that was made of wool?

And so when he was told, it was hard to make him understand what a farm was like, and harder still to answer all the questions. Soon Daddie gave up even trying, and said he thought he would let them all be surprises; and if Laddie wanted to know about anything he must wait till he reached the farm, and then go to that thing and ask it to tell him.

"What a funny Daddie you are!" laughed the boy. "Animals can't talk. I know that much, anyway."

"I am not so sure of that," Daddie replied. "They have told me many things. But then, I listened carefully."

"O Daddie! are you really in earnest? And if I listen carefully will they tell me things too?" and the boy's eyes were big with astonishment.

"I suggest that you try, at least, and see," advised Daddie. "Each bird, each tree, each chicken, each flower and stone has a most interesting story to tell; but they never, never tell it to people who do not love them. But if you become good friends with them, then I think you will hear better stories than Mother Dear or I have ever been able to tell you."

"O that will be perfectly splendid! for I *do* love stories, and I promise to listen to all they say, and to love everything on our farm. But do, Daddie, please tell me something about our new home," begged the lad once more.

Daddie began, teasingly: "Well then, there is a house—"

"Yes! Yes! What else?"

"—and a barn—where some of our friends live."

"Our friends live in a barn? O Daddie! I don't think that is nice. Do you?"

"These friends find it very comfortable, and they told me quietly they thought they would like it—especially when Laddie got there. And they begged me to ask him to please hurry."

"O Daddie! did they really say that?" and the boy hugged him tight in sheer delight.

"Indeed they did; but they asked me not to mention their names, as they wished you to call upon them when you arrived and they would introduce themselves. But you must find them out, for they will not come to you. At least most of them will not."

"And when can we go? To-morrow? O please, Daddie, go to-morrow!"

"No, Laddie, not quite as soon as that; though to-morrow you can begin to get your treasures together that you wish to take with you, and I will help you pack them. But we will go early next week; so be patient a few days longer."

"Well then, Daddie, won't you tell me about the friends who do not live in the barn? Where do they live?"

"Many of them live out-of-doors all the time. Some have made their own homes. And, Laddie

boy, remember that everything that lives there is happy and contented. They all love each other, and will love us too, when they find they can trust us. We must be very gentle and never frighten them, and then they will soon enjoy having us live with them."

"O Daddie! you know I would never hurt them, don't you?"

"Yes, and I told them so. I said: 'Laddie is a dear, loving little chap, but he does not know much about your ways; so you must teach him how you like to be treated, and then he will be good to you.'"

"And what did they say then?" questioned the boy, anxiously.

"They said: 'Tell him to *listen carefully* and *watch closely*. That is all that is necessary.' Now, Laddie, suppose I tell you the name of our farm, and that will give you something else to think about. It's name is 'Happy Days,' and a very appropriate one it is too. But I think I will let you learn for yourself why it is called 'Happy Days.' And now, my boy, it is bedtime."

"O but, Daddie, I am sure I cannot go to sleep! I have so much to think about. Won't you please tell me a story first? Just one—about our friends?"

As this was a nightly request, Daddie did not even hesitate.

"Let me see. I wonder which friend I had better tell you about. There is the brook that never talks, but always sings—and there are the beautiful flowers that grow wild and always look up into your face to see if you really love them. And then there is the big tree with a swing in it, and——"

"Oh! only one tree? I am so sorry."

"No, Laddie; there are many trees, but only one like this one. I think I will tell you about him. The lady I bought the farm of said it all happened when she was a little girl about your age. It was her father who bought the piece of woodland in order to save the tree; so that now, though the woods are gone, this tree is still a part of our farm. Now listen to the story of THE GIANT.

"He stood on the edge of a wood. He had stood there many, many years, for he was very old. Years ago he had forgotten his birthday. He only knew that all of his old friends who had grown up with him had long since left him, though he had quickly made friends with those who had come to take their places. He remembered when the deer used to pass him on the way

to a near-by spring, and they had always stopped long enough to greet him and tell their news. And the sight of the red men stealing in and out among the trees of the wood had been in earlier days a very familiar one.

"He remembered also when the first white man came and had lain all night in a blanket at his feet, while he sang him to sleep with songs of hope and promise, and then watched over him as he slept.

"But this was long before the town was built that had brought so many changes. And though these changes meant the passing of the Indian and the deer, they also meant homes built near him; and in those homes lived not only men and women, but little children—many of them.

"And when the schoolhouse was built, the very nearest way to it led the children to pass him daily; and so they soon learned to love him and became his friends. They called him The Giant, for no tree for miles around was so large or high as he. And they loved his stories, because he was always ready to whisper something new to them; and oh! he had so many, many secrets! On hot summer days there were sure to be many children about him, playing in the shade he so gladly offered. And when these

children became grown it did not make him unhappy, for he knew that some day they would bring their children to play with him.

"The birds loved him too; for he protected their nests beautifully, and was very careful not to swing their cradles too hard when there were babies in them. In fact, he made them so welcome, they often returned to the same place year after year.

"And then a lovely pair of squirrels, Mr. and Mrs. Gray, had begun their housekeeping there, and liked their home so much they had remained ever since. In fact, everybody and everything loved The Giant; and I think it was because he was always happy, always giving what he had for others' comfort and sharing in everyone's good times.

"And when the big storms came that laid so many of his companions low, he had only laughed and chuckled with glee; and the winds heard him say: 'You may try your best, but I am stronger than you.' And then he dug his toes a little deeper into the ground, until they passed over.

"And so he saw nothing in the past to sadden him, and nothing in the future to dread or be afraid of. He was happy in the thought that he was needed right where he stood.

"He was thinking of this one warm summer morning, when he saw Mr. Gray come scampering hard down the path that ran through the woods, and up to his nest.

"Mrs. Gray met him at the door. 'Is there anything the matter with the children?' she asked, anxiously.

"'No, but there soon will be,' answered Mr. Gray; 'for where we will find another home like this, I can't imagine.'

"'Another home? Why, what do you mean?' inquired his wife.

"The Giant pricked up all his leaves, for his friends surely must be in trouble.

"'Yes, another home! We must certainly leave here, and at once, while we have time.'

"Mrs. Gray became very much excited. Her tail was not still a minute and she chattered shrilly until Mr. Gray begged her to be calm and listen, although his own heart was pounding in his soft breast like mad.

"'You remember the man that was hanging around here the other day? You know we thought at first he might be after us, so we kept quiet and watched. And then we saw it was the trees he was interested in, and not us at all. And you remember the funny mark he made on

The Giant's side? Our daughter said it quite spoiled the aristocratic looks of the place. I couldn't understand why he did it, myself; but to-day I heard some men talking about it. They said, "The Giant is old, *and he has got to go.*"

"Got to go? What nonsense! How can he go, and where can he go to?"

"I'm sure I don't know, but that is exactly what they said. They think there are too many trees here now; and as The Giant will never be any larger, he must *go*, and then the other trees will have more room in which to grow. But if I don't know what it all means, I do know that before he goes we must find another home."

"When is he going?" she demanded.

"That I don't know, either," answered Mr. Gray, sadly.

"Mrs. Gray buried her nose in her small hands and wept bitterly.

"O dear! O dear! You brought me here a happy bride, and all of our children have been born here also. What will Flip, and Flirt, and Pet say? And only this morning Bright Eyes said she had a far more fashionable address than any of her friends. Her new visiting cards read so beautifully:

MISS BRIGHT EYES GRAY.

Apartment C.

The Giant.

And this place is so convenient—and all of my friends live near-by—and what will we do without The Giant?—and why does he have to go? O dear! I don't believe he wants to.'

"‘I don't see, myself, why he hasn't told us. He always does tell us everything, and he knows how fond we are of our little home. We have such a safe storehouse here too. I am sure I don't know where to look for another; but perhaps I had better take a run around the neighborhood and see what I can find. So, good-bye,’ and he scampered down the tree and was soon out of sight.

"Mrs. Gray went back to her work in the house, sobbing quietly.

"The Giant for the first time in his life felt himself alone. He saw his friends that stood nearest lean towards each other and whisper, but he could not hear what was said. Perhaps he was getting old and so did not hear now as quickly as he ought. Funny he had never noticed it till to-day though! And what did it

mean to go?—and where could he go?—and how?

“He must think—and he was soon so deeply engaged in the problem he had to solve that not even a leaf trembled.

“After a time he was aroused by Mr. Gray’s scampering madly up to his nest again. The Giant strained his ears to hear all that might be said. Mrs. Gray again met her husband at the door where she had been awaiting his return. Before he could catch his breath even, she was demanding his news.

“‘The—poor—Giant!’ he panted. ‘He has got—to go—soon.’

“‘How is he going?’ questioned Mrs. Gray.

“‘O, my dear! I can’t bear to think of it. He has got to go—with an ax!’

“‘An ax? You mean——’

“‘I mean some men are going to cut him down and sell him for lumber. They said he would bring them a great many dollars.’

“‘O, our poor old friend!’ sobbed Mrs. Gray, for once forgetting the home she was about to lose. ‘Did you hear when he was going?’

“‘No, they didn’t say. Perhaps he knows. Let’s ask him.’

"Clinging to a branch they stuck their heads out and looked up at The Giant.

"'Dear Giant, do you know when you are going?' they asked together.

"The Giant mournfully shook his leaves and answered never a word. He was indeed sad; for he who had loved everybody and everything was to be forced to leave them all. And now he knew *how* he must go. Every leaf hung lifeless, and a great cracking sound came from the very heart of his being; but it was his last protest.

"He said to himself: 'I will be brave to the end. And as I do not know when I shall go, I had better be getting ready. First I must say good-bye to all my friends—and they are many. And then I must ask the trees that are going to take my place to be good to my birds and squirrels. But O my dear children! What will they do? No other tree here can shade them as well as I, neither is there any tree the boys like so well to climb. And they have always loved me so, I am afraid they will think I am deserting them. But O, my children! It is not so. I would gladly stay and play with you, and in future years with your children too. For I protest—I am not old. I am as young as I ever was, and O I *don't want*

to go!— But, perhaps,' and he brightened at the thought, 'some other children need me more—and so I will be patient and cheerful, and say good-bye with a happy face,' and he began at once to sing. It was a merry song, and soon every leaf was dancing to the gay music.

"The next day was a busy one. He had given a lot of friendly advice to the young trees that were to take his place. He had told the squirrels of a nice home to be found not far away, and had advised the birds to start building new nests at once in some of the other trees. All was now finished but bidding the children good-bye.

"He knew they would be here early this hot afternoon, and he was looking his best for them; for he had had a nice bath early in the morning, and then the sun had come out to dry his clothes, and now every leaf was beautifully clean.

"Yes—here they were—running and jumping in their happiest mood. How could he tell them? If only they could have heard of it from someone else, how much easier it would have been. But he remembered he must be brave and cheerful.

"So he called out in the bright, joyous tone

the children knew so well: 'Good afternoon, dear children. Hurry, and I will fan you while I sing you a beautiful new song—all about a journey—I am—going—to——'

"Poor Giant! How hard it was to play being happy, when even the sap in his veins felt congealed! He was about to try once more, when a dear little maiden spoke to him:

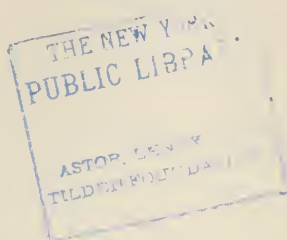
"'Dear Giant! This is to be our very happiest time together, and no other time will ever be the same to us as this.'

"'No, indeed!' thought The Giant, 'if there should ever happen to be another time.' But wisely he kept the gloomy thought to himself, and only shook his head sadly.

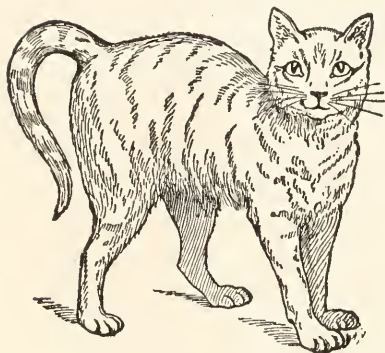
"'You see, dear Giant,' continued the sweet voice below, 'you have told us many, many beautiful secrets; but to-day we have the *beautifullest* secret of all to tell you. Children—join hands—in a circle—all around him. And now—say—it.'

"Never before did children's voices sound sweeter, as they all cried together: '*Dear—Giant. You—need—not—go. You—can—stay.*'"





The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hillside's dew-pearled,
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!
ROBERT BROWNING.



Let me tell the stories, and I care not who writes the
text-books.

G. STANLEY HALL.

DAINTY MAID

IT would be very difficult to portray Laddie's surprise and delight on reaching Happy Days Farm. First there was the big driveway, edged on both sides with stately elms. Then the house seemed so homelike with its many windows and open doors; and there on the big porch were the farmer and his wife—who were to do the actual work on the place and in the house—waiting to welcome them.

How Laddie longed to follow that driveway to see just where it ended. He could see it led to the big barn beyond, at least. But the boy was too weary from his journey to do little more than wonder yet; and so Dickum, whose eyes, too, had been drinking in everything, reluctantly followed his little master into the house.

And then who ever ate such a delicious supper? Surely the eggs must be better at Happy Days than anywhere else. That was true of the milk also, Laddie decided, as his glass was refilled.

And such biscuits and butter—to say nothing of the honey that was better than any candy he had ever tasted.

But soon his eyes simply refused to stay open any longer, and he was taken up-stairs to a sweet, pretty room that he learned was to be his own. And then came restful sleep, with the pure, cool air from the open windows whispering to him of many things.

It was late when Laddie awoke the next morning—that is, late for a farmer; for that is what he had thoroughly decided the night before he was going to be. He was entirely rested, and ready and eager for what the day might bring. Even dressing was not such a laborious task as usual, and soon he was ready for breakfast. It didn't seem as though he could be hungry after his big supper of the night before, but Mother Dear was well pleased to see that such was the case. And if he disposed of his breakfast more quickly than usual, nothing was said; for Mother Dear knew that Laddie's feet were fairly itching to fly out through the door with him, and so off on a tour of investigation.

At last he was ready: heavy shoes on his feet, trousers that would neither show soil nor tear

readily, a warm sweater—for the mornings were still cool—and a big straw hat of which Laddie was very proud, for it was just like the one the farmer wore.

O what a morning it was! He had no time to *listen carefully* or *watch closely* yet, for he must first take a peep at everything on the place. And so he raced around, with Dickum a close second, from brook to trees—from the newly planted gardens to the beehives. Then he made a quick run across the lot to where The Giant stood, and then back to a small pond where a duck was giving her babies their first lesson in swimming.

Next he was off to the big barn, which he had already examined several times. And all the while the birds, hidden up there in the trees, were singing as though their hearts were fairly bursting with joy.

And the flowers—why, he was finding them everywhere. Some day he meant to learn their names; but now he stopped only long enough to say “Yes, I *do* love you,” and then was off to see the new calf, or to ride on the horse’s back down to the field which the farmer was about to plow. Spring had indeed come; the glorious sun shone warmly; and everything was almost

too good to be true. Laddie was living at Happy Days.

After dinner, to which he did full justice, Mother Dear insisted that a nap was necessary; and though the lad hated to waste a minute sleeping in the daytime, he consented the more readily as his legs *did* ache, for he was unused to so much strenuous exertion.

And so several days passed very happily, though he was far too busy to get really acquainted with anything living at Happy Days. He had thought of it many times, but always there was something that seemed to demand his attention more.

To-day he had just gone out to the wagonshed to watch the swallows, building up in the eaves. They were all very busy, and Laddie was trying hard to see just how they flew, and especially how they made their sudden swoops, when something rubbed against his leg. At first he thought it was Dickum, and paid no attention. Then he felt something gently clawing through his stocking, and this time he looked down to see what it could be.

There at his feet was a cat, and a most ugly-looking one, he decided, off-hand; for her fur was marked closely all over with a dirty, brown-



ish yellow, well mixed with black. Laddie thought he had never seen anything quite so hideous as that mixture of colors, for he was exceedingly sensitive concerning ugly things.

He was about to move away impatiently, when the cat put her paw up to his leg again; but this time it was a gentle stroke she gave him. But that paw—my! how big it was! And now he looked closely, all of her paws were big ones. They reminded him of boxing-gloves. He picked up one of her feet and examined it. It was soft and silky, with a nice hard pad to walk on. He was about to release the foot, when the cat suddenly opened the claws and as suddenly sheathed them again.

“So that is what you scratch me with,” said Laddie, much interested. “I think you could do plenty of damage with those things.”

“Yes, I could if I wanted to; but I was trying only to attract your attention, not to scratch you,” replied the cat in a soft, purring voice.

Laddie’s eyes and mouth were wide open in astonishment. “Why, you can *talk*, or did I dream it?”

“Of course I can talk; but I could not make

you understand, unless you wanted to very much."

"How do you know I want to?"

"O I have heard all about you, Laddie! You have been here only a few days, but everything on the place is talking about you; and they all speak nicely of you too. Somehow I felt I could trust you—and I trust very few humans—so I decided to make your acquaintance. But —" and the cat shook her head sadly, "I am afraid you are going to disappoint me after all."

"Disappoint you? Indeed, I hope not," replied Laddie, on the verge of tears; for he was not used to being told he was a disappointment to anyone. "How do you mean?"

"Why, just because you didn't like my looks at first, you began to shrink away from me. O I felt you!" as Laddie would have protested. "You didn't see any of my good points, and I have many of them too. You didn't even look for them. I would have been willing to have helped you, but now you must discover them for yourself." All of which was said in the cat's proudest tone.

"I did notice your nice, big feet," Laddie hastened to assure her; "and I dare say I will

get used to your color soon. You seem to have a lot of it though."

"Pst!" and she fairly spat it out. "A lot of color, indeed! I would not change my color with anyone, I assure you. It is a most serviceable one, and does not show the dirt at all. I *look* clean to you, don't I? But just run your fingers through my fur and see what you find."

Laddie stooped and stroked the fur an instant, before venturing to do as he was bidden. "Oh, your fur is lovely and soft—and warm too! And," now running his hand without hesitation through the fur, "how thick it is—and long! Yes, your fur is very lovely—all but the color," he added, teasingly.

"So you have learned another nice thing about me," said the cat, well pleased. "But perhaps you had better run into the house now and wash your hands, for they must be quite dirty after touching me," and her tone was decidedly sarcastic.

Laddie gazed at his hands. No, they were quite clean, for he had washed them just before he came out to the shed. What could the cat mean? He held them up to convince her.

"Not dirty, eh? And after all that investiga-

tion too. How do you account for it?" And the cat sat down, as though she had asked a question that would take some time to answer.

"Why," replied Laddie, much perplexed, "I suppose you cannot be very dirty after all."

"Cannot be dirty with all this dirty color? O, Laddie, you probably did not half try! Run your hand quickly up and down my fur and watch the dust fly!" she commanded.

Laddie obeyed; but not a speck of dust could he raise. He hastened to say so.

"Now that's funny. Suppose you try your handkerchief. That is, if you have a clean one," and again the cat spoke slyly.

Laddie flushed, for he knew he did get his handkerchiefs very grimy; but, to his great relief, he found a nice, clean one in his pocket that had not been even unfolded. He shook it out and passed it rapidly over the fur.

"Now examine it, for I am sure it must be quite ready for the tub by this time." Laddie now thought he caught a twinkle in the cat's eye as she spoke.

"No, there is not a bit of dirt on this either.

I begin to think you are just having fun with me," and Laddie spoke in an aggrieved voice.

"O no! Far be it from me. I am trying to make you find out things for yourself, and learn to avoid hasty conclusions. For that is what you must begin to do, if you ever hope to become friends with us here at Happy Days Farm. You must obey the rules—*listen carefully* and *watch closely*. I am trying only to show you how. For instance, what is the color of my eyes?" and she turned her head away quickly.

"I think they are yellow. O no, they aren't!" as the cat looked at him again. "They are green."

The cat opened her mouth wide in what was intended for a grin. "You were right both times. Sometimes they are yellow, and sometimes green. And if you wish to really know things, you must not only *watch closely*, but you must stick to a thing when you know you are right. But you will soon learn," as Laddie was hanging his head, much ashamed. "Have you noticed my size?"

"Yes, you are nearly the size of Dickum."

"Nearly? Why, I am much bigger—that is, I weigh more. I was hoping you would notice

my size yourself; for I am by far the largest cat for many miles around. And very proud I am of it too."

"Thank you for telling me; but you see I do not know any other cat and so I could not know that, could I?"

"No, I suppose not. And now, let's see just what you have learned."

"I have learned all about your fur anyhow," Laddie began; when suddenly he saw that same fur standing up straight, and the cat's back arched high.

"Why, that is only Dickum coming to find me," Laddie explained. "You needn't be afraid of him."

But now Laddie heard Dickum barking madly; and evidently he was desirous of making a dash at the cat, if he could do it with perfect safety to himself.

"Dickum, I am ashamed of you. This is a new friend of mine, and she lives here on the place." But for once Dickum was deaf to his little master's voice. Laddie explained, pleaded, and threatened, but Dickum still barked and danced around as though he had lost all his senses. The cat was spitting very spitefully also; and at last Laddie thought it best to in-

terfere. He took Dickum by the collar and dragged him off, barking and struggling, to a small workshop; then put him in, shut and bolted the door.

"Now, Dickum, you will have to stay in there till you can behave. You must learn not to annoy my friends. I will come back and let you out later. No," for Dickum was begging to be let out, "you must stay there till I finish my talk with the cat."

Laddie rushed back to reassure his new friend. He wondered if she was so frightened she had run away to hide. That would be too bad. He was much relieved to find her in the same place, as though awaiting his return.

"Really, that dog is going to be an awful nuisance, I am afraid," she began, stifling a yawn.

"Dickum is *never* a nuisance," Laddie returned, indignantly. "You must have displeased him in some way, for he is always most friendly."

"Yes—but not with cats. You might as well understand from the start that Dickum and I will never be friends. He does not like me, and I do not like him—and never shall."

"But why?"

"Oh, I suppose it all started many, many years ago! Over what, I do not know. I only know that all dogs and cats have an antipathy for each other; and when they meet they always act as Dickum and I did; sometimes, much worse."

"And can nothing be done to make you like each other?"

"No, it is too late for that. If we had both been raised here on this farm and grown up together, we would have tolerated each other, and might even have been friendly. But such friendships have to be made very early in life. You cannot expect us to change at our age. After this, when you come to see me, you had better leave Dickum in the house. That is, unless you want him to get hurt."

"Yes, I will; but you would be the one to get hurt, you know."

"O no, I wouldn't! I would jump quickly on his back, like this," and she gave a sudden leap into the air as though attacking an imaginary foe. It was so sudden it startled Laddie.

"My! You can jump quick."

"Yes, that is another of my good points," and the cat grinned again. "What chance

would Dickum have against me? And when I got on his back, he could never shake me off. And then my claws would soon make him howl for mercy. He would probably start to run, but I would only enjoy the ride. It would not interfere with what I was doing in the least. He would soon have enough of it, I assure you; and ever after that he would treat me respectfully—though not lovingly. I think," she mused, "I shall soon try it."

"O, please don't! I love Dickum dearly, and he means to be a good dog. You see he is not used to cats, but I shall try to make him let you alone. What a lot I have learned about you to-day!"

"Let's see! Did you finally decide that my fur was clean?"

"O yes; perfectly clean. But would you mind telling me who gives you your baths?" asked Laddie, curiously.

"Oh, that is a much simpler thing with me, than with you—or Dickum. I always bathe myself—a thing that Dickum can't do and make a good job of it. I saw him trying it the other day when he had gotten himself all covered with mud. Really, Laddie, I thought he looked very ugly. I didn't like

his colors at all," and again she gave her sudden grin.

"Well, *you* certainly do a good job. I would love to see your bathtub though."

"All right. You can, for here it is," and she opened her mouth wide.

Laddie laughed. "Now don't try to tell me you jump into your own mouth when you want a bath, for I couldn't possibly believe that."

"O no; not exactly that way. But still my mouth is the tub that holds the water or saliva, and my tongue I use as a sponge or, perhaps I should say, brush; for it is nice and rough and gets off all the dirt beautifully. See, I do it this way," and she began licking Laddie's hand.

Laddie quickly withdrew it. "My! I should say it was rough. Dickum's is rough too."

"Yes, I suppose so; though I don't care to be compared to him, for I am much his superior," and she purred contentedly.

"Oh, you just think that because you don't like him! But he is an awfully bright dog. Why, he knows most as much as I do. Sometimes," confessed Laddie, frankly, "I think he knows more."

"O yes; I see you have the popular opinion. But a bright dog is never as intelligent as a bright cat. Why," she added hastily, seeing Laddie was about to interrupt, "a dog is nothing but a slave to his master. No respectable cat would take orders from any human as a dog does. A dog will make friends with anyone who will give him a good word and enough to eat. But I can tell you, cats are very particular. They look a person over pretty well before they decide to be friendly, and then they select only a few people for friends. Humans think they are the ones who do the selecting, but that is not true. Our cat instinct tells us whether to make friends with a person or not."

"O, say," protested Laddie, "I think you are too much prejudiced against dogs! Why, Dickum can find me, no matter where I go—his sense of smell is so good—and he is always at my heels to protect me if necessary, and——"

"I think," interrupted the cat, "you are prejudiced in their favor. Why, I could find you as easily as Dickum, if I wanted to. But I probably should not want to. And a cat knows the way home as well as a dog, no matter how far away she may be. And as for protecting you, I think I have just shown you I could easily put

a dog to flight; so I consider myself a better protector than a mere dog. But then, again, I should not follow you around all day; so of course I should not be there when needed. Dogs do seem to have no sense of humor," and she stretched herself, daintily.

"I never thought of those things before," said Laddie, thoughtfully. "But then you are the first cat I ever got acquainted with. Have you a name?"

"Yes, I was named Dainty Maid when I was very young. They called me that because I was so ladylike and dainty in all my ways."

"Who gave you that name? For you are only a barn cat, are you? At least I have never seen you in the house."

"No, and neither have you seen any human touch me but yourself. I keep as far away from them all as I can, for experience has taught me I could not trust them. But it was not always so, for I was born in a house the same as you. My mother was a great pet of the family, and when we kittens were born nothing was too good for us—that is, for a while."

"O, do tell me about it! Your voice is so sad, I am sure you have had a hard life."

“Well, I suppose it is more or less the same as any cat’s life. But that does not help any that I know of. I had a mother of whom any cat could be proud. She had a nice home on a farm with some old people; and, as I said, was a great pet. Nothing was too good for her. She had cream to eat every day; a soft pillow in a basket by the fire to sleep on in winter; and she was always welcome to help herself to a cushion or soft bed anywhere.

“And when one day she showed her master four little kittens, he was almost as pleased as she was. For though Mother had raised many children, we were the first she had had since coming to the farm to live. For some reason I became the favorite, and they named me Dainty Maid as soon as I was big enough to run around. They even admired my colors”—slyly. “Well, all of us kittens had the best of training, for our mother was very particular with us; and she taught us to keep ourselves clean—so clean that no dirt or dust on us would ever soil a little boy’s white handkerchief,” and she gave her sudden grin.

“She taught us to eat nicely, also; and never, never to put our feet in our feeding dish, or to pull our food out of it on to the floor. She

taught us to eat slowly, too, and not to gulp our food down as Dick— I mean, a dog does. She gave us lessons in leaping quickly, and showed us how to take care of ourselves if we should ever happen to meet a foe. And she did not forget to teach us where the best places were to hunt mice; for we must learn to provide for ourselves, though at present it did not seem at all necessary. We were taught patience in watching for a mouse to appear, and then our quickness of motion enabled us to do the rest. Life was very happy on the farm; and as we kittens were very playful, we afforded much amusement to the old people.

“But as we grew larger, we became more sedate in our manner; and then the old people began to say that five cats were too many. One day I came in from the barn where I had spent a long time watching for a mouse, to find Mother in deep sorrow; and my brothers and sister—missing. I never knew what happened to them, and if Mother knew she never told me. Mother now spent more time with me than ever. She appeared to think some harm would come to me if she let me out of her sight. But days passed, and nothing of the sort occurred. We began to feel secure once more, when one day the son of

the old people, with his wife and child, came for a visit.

“I made friends with them at once; and Master told them so many nice things about me, I tried to show them they were all true. I have always been sorry I was so friendly; for when they got ready to go home, the child said he wanted to take me with him. When refused, he began to cry and stamp his foot; and he carried on so, they soon said that, if he felt so badly, he could have me. And so I left my mother to go with them, and I have never seen her since.

“They were fairly good to me in my new home, though I could see I was only tolerated by the older ones because I amused the child. Still I always had enough to eat and a nice bed. And so everything was all right till my first babies came. I remembered the fuss that had been made over us when we were born, and I thought my family would give as much pleasure. But alas! My babies, I found, were not wanted—not at all. The dear little things were not a day old when the cruel humans took them from me, and I never saw them again. O, Laddie! I shall never forget how I felt! Of course I have had many kittens since, but they were my *first*

ones. They were such perfect little things; and I knew I could train them to become nice cats some day, for Mother had shown me just how. But, as I said, they were taken from me—every one.

“I was very sick after that; for you see I had made a lot of nice milk for them, and now I had no way of getting rid of it. If they had left me only one kitten, that would have helped a great deal. But they didn’t, and so I was sick for some time. I kept calling for my babies, too, but it only made the humans cross and did no good; so after a time I stopped.

“After I got well, I returned to my old way of living as though nothing had happened. Things went on all right until my next babies came. This time I found a nice place in which to hide them, so they would be safe. But alas! When my kittens were just three days old, they also disappeared. Of course I thought the humans did it, but I never could be sure. Whatever it was, it all happened while I was gone to get my supper. I studied over the matter, and watched the humans closely for a while. I thought they might have hidden them from me, so I used to spy upon them; but to no avail. I also searched

everywhere, but I never found a trace of my babies.

“Well, I stayed there a couple of years, and things grew worse instead of better. As the boy grew older, he had little use for me; and as his parents had never really cared for me, I began to worry about my future. If I could have gone back to my mother, I would; but I had been brought too far for even a cat to attempt to return. And each time my babies came, I hid them in places I was sure nothing could find. I was always very careful in coming and going that no one should see me; but every time my babies disappeared. But still, as much as I might suspect, I was never quite sure.

“But one day I heard the woman say: ‘The next time Dainty Maid has kittens, I think we might as well put her out of the way too.’ And so at last I knew what had become of all my babies. But where had they been put? Truly the humans must be brighter than I, for each time I had thought *I* had put them out of the way. But they must know safer hiding-places than I did. And now I knew what to expect. I could never hope to keep any kittens in that place. But would I mind being put out of the way as long as I was with my babies?

I didn't think so; and yet, I knew the humans would never be likely to do anything that would give us pleasure.

"Laddie, I did a lot of thinking; and the result was that, before my next kittens were born, I deliberately walked away from that wicked place, and traveled until I came to an old empty barn all off by itself in a lot. It was just the place I wanted. I had had my eye on it for some time, and I had never seen a human near it. I had decided to go away from the humans entirely. I was glad to find such a place in which to live, and from that time I became a wild or barn cat, as you call me.

"Again I had a family of kittens—but only three this time. They were all healthy, and soon grew to be very cunning. I tried to teach them all the things Mother had taught me, and they learned very fast. We were all perfectly happy together, and I told myself that when a cat follows her highest instincts, she knows just what is best to do for her family.

"But alas! As it proved, I had not done wisely. Some bad boys came to the barn to play one day, and found my family. My children had never seen a human before, and did not know what to do. I called to them to run up a

tree that grew near the barn; but before they could do so the boys had headed them off, and soon all three were prisoners. Had dogs been annoying my family, I would have fought them to the end; but I could not hope to fight humans. There was little I could do to help except to keep as near as possible, so when the boys started off with them I followed closely.

"At first I did not think any real harm would come to my children, for the boy I had lived with had never been cruel to me. So how was I to know boys would ever dream of doing the things they soon started to do? They first lamented the fact that there were but three kittens, and then they sat down to decide what they could do with them that would be most fun. I remembered my children's cunning ways, and hoped the boys would appreciate their being far above the average. As I say, I did not worry at all at first, and called to my children not to be frightened, for I was near.

"By this time the boys had decided what to do. Six of the seven started out to look for something, while the seventh stayed behind and held the kittens. When I saw them come back with their hands full of stones, I began to wonder. Then they took one of my children, and putting

him in the center of a big lot, with not a tree near and not even grass to hide in, they let him go. Now I was sure they did not mean any harm, and when I heard a stone whiz after my child I wondered what it meant. Quickly another one flew, then another, and another; and soon I began to understand. Those young fiends were stoning my child. I was wild with anxiety and called him to come to me; but he was so frightened he could not run fast, and whenever he turned to come my way the boys would head him off. Soon I saw he was dragging one leg after him, and I knew he had been struck. I thought then they would be satisfied. But no—they each threw one more stone at him, as he once more tried to crawl towards me; and when the last stone was thrown, he lay quite still. I called again, but he did not move; and I knew those wicked boys had done their worst.

“But I had no time to mourn my loss, for the boys had now started on with my two remaining children. They soon reached a bridge which spanned a rapidly flowing brook. They took my little daughter next, and, tying a string rather loosely around her neck, lowered her into the water. I expected to see her die of fright, for she had ever been more easily scared than the

others; but she tried to put up a valiant fight. They let her go under the water once, and then drew her up just above the surface. She came out, clawing wildly; but she could reach nothing to cling to, so her struggles were of no avail. They let her down into the water again. This time she was kept there longer, and she did not struggle much when pulled out. They let her down the third time; and when she was pulled up she hung there, perfectly limp; and I knew I had lost another child.

“I still had one left, and he was the strongest of them all. I hoped, even if their wicked ingenuity had not all run out, that he, at least, would be able to escape. I called a warning to him, and he answered. But now his turn had come. They threw him into the stream; and though he had never tried swimming, I hoped the current would take him away from his tormentors, and that I should be able to save him. But they did not intend for him to escape; for the boys now separated, part on one side of the stream and part on the other. My child nearly got to shore twice, but each time he was driven back by the boys. At last his strength failed, and he tried no more. Laddie, I was crazy with grief. The boys could easily have caught me if they had wanted to;

but they were now tired of their *fun*, and hurried away.

"I have heard people talk about 'the good God,' and I cannot understand why He permits such wicked things to happen; for we cats are His children too.

"Well, time passed. I did not go back to the old barn. It would have been too lonely. I sought others of my kind, but made no permanent home. One day an old cat who traveled much told us that new people had come to a farm called Happy Days, and that everything on the place liked them because they were so kind. He said nothing was ever hurt at this place, neither did children ever disappear mysteriously. He told us much more—and I tell you it sounded good to me. I said nothing to the others, but I started off to see for myself if what I had heard was true. I came soon after you did, Laddie; and I have studied you closely. I have been near you many times, but you never saw me. I liked your kind ways and gentle voice, and at last I decided you could be trusted. And so I came up to you to-day and introduced myself—for I very much wanted to be friends with you."

"I am so glad you did. I cannot tell you how

wicked I think those bad, bad boys were," said Laddie, sympathetically. "I don't wonder you don't trust us humans. But nothing like that will ever happen here, I assure you. No, Sir-ree! Nothing shall be hurt at Happy Days. And if at any time there is anything I can do for you," he added, politely, "don't hesitate to let me know."

"Do you mean that?" asked the cat, earnestly.

"I certainly do."

"Well, you could do something for me—right away. I know we are not old friends enough to warrant such a request, but the matter is most urgent, and——"

"Don't say any more," begged Laddie. "Of course we are friends—good friends. And I meant what I said when I made that promise."

Dainty Maid looked long and deeply into Laddie's eyes, as though reading his very soul. Laddie smiled gently back at her, all the time softly stroking her head.

Dainty Maid was evidently perfectly satisfied. She turned suddenly, and, calling over her shoulder "Follow me, then, Laddie," stole swiftly but silently towards the big barn.

Laddie kept close at her heels, as Dainty Maid, with head and tail held high, stepping so lightly she scarcely seemed to touch the ground, hurried down the driveway and entered the big door of the barn. She led the way up the stairs and then over to a corner of the haymow. There, safely sheltered in the warm, sweet hay, was a squirming mass; but it was too dark at first for Laddie to see more clearly. He looked at the cat in a most perplexed way. "Really, Dainty Maid, I suppose it is very interesting, but I do not quite understand—" he began, apologetically.

"Why, bless your heart!" purred the cat. "Don't you see they are my children—all four of them?"

"O—h!" and Laddie now was as interested as any proud mother could desire. "And this is what you brought me here for? You have some more babies again. I am *so* glad."

"So am I," replied the cat, very seriously. "Or I shall be," she corrected, "when you assure me again that my children are safe here."

"They certainly are. I can truly promise you that. Do you mind if I pick them up? I am just aching to."

"I had rather you would not just yet. You see they are only two days old, and their eyes are still shut tight. But in a few days, when their eyes are open, you will see just how cunning they really are."

"And can I come and look at them as often as I wish?" the boy eagerly asked.

"Yes; as long as you don't handle them, I don't mind. But I may have to hide them in another place soon. The farmer may find them at any moment. He has tried to follow me several times, and if he seems likely to find this place, I know of another good one. So don't be disappointed if they are not here."

"But, Dainty Maid, the farmer will not hurt your babies. I know; for he is a great friend of mine, and he is always kind to everything on Happy Days," Laddie assured her, warmly.

"Yes, I know that. But after my experiences, I do not want my babies to be too friendly with the humans. They always want to handle them—and too much of that spoils any kitten. But, Laddie," she continued earnestly, "if we are to have shelter here, and be protected, it is but right we should give something in return. You asked me if I was a barn cat—as though that

were a disgrace. I am a barn cat here from choice, because by living such a life I can find my own food and be perfectly independent; and also I can keep the barn clear of rats and mice that always do so much damage."

"I think you are a most grateful person, and I will always speak a good word for you. I suppose you would not like me to handle the kittens when they are a little older, either?"—wistfully. "Seems so I just must, sometime."

"Oh, I will not be as strict as that with *friends*," and she gave her sudden grin. "Come out often and see me train my babies; and you will find there is nothing in the whole big world more cunning than a family of bright kittens."

"Well, Dainty Maid, you have told me a very interesting story, and have also given me a nice lesson. It is my first lesson here too. I will try not to forget the rules again. I really did not know how to *watch* or *listen* before."

"And if you obey those rules you will hear many stories more interesting than mine. And now you must excuse me, for it is my babies' supper time," and she stepped daintily down into the nest and stretched herself beside them.

"Come again to-morrow; and in the meantime you might be thinking up some names for the children. Let me see! That would make you their godfather, wouldn't it?"

"Oh! may I? That is very kind of you, for I never named anything in my life. I did not even name Dickum. But will you tell me whether you want girls' or boys' names?"

"O Laddie! do you want to disappoint me again? You must learn not to try to make everything like yourself. *You* may think it very desirable to be a human, but no cat would agree with you. We are always cats—neither more nor less—and nothing can change us; for the cat-type is our ideal—not the human-type. And the most domesticated cat in the world would find it very easy to drop back into the wild state. You humans never fully succeed in civilizing us, no matter how hard you try. The next time you meet a cat, *watch closely* and see if you don't find this true. But now I will answer your question. I have two sons and two daughters. Give them any names you choose, only let them be appropriate."

"Yes, but they must be pretty ones too. I think one should always be most careful about that. To be given a homely or unpleasant name

must be a terrible trial, I think. Thank you so much. And now I will leave you until morning, as it is getting rather dark up here. And you mustn't forget that you are the first real friend I have made at Happy Days."

"No, and *you* mustn't forget that when a strange cat comes to live with you, she *always* brings good luck. Good-night, Laddie."

And indeed He seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal knight,
"Who revered his conscience as his king;
Whose glory was, redressing human wrong. . . ."
TENNYSON'S "IDYLLS OF THE KING."



The childhood shows the man,
As morning shows the day.
MILTON.

A CONGRESS OF TYRANTS

SEVERAL weeks had passed, and though Laddie had succeeded in becoming acquainted with almost every living thing on the farm, and had tried to follow the rules, still Dainty Maid and her cunning family remained his only friends as yet. If any of them had spoken to him, he had not been able to understand. And so Laddie was forced to fall back upon Mother Dear for his stories, without which—and many of them—he never thought he could be happy.

The stories lately had all been about King Arthur and his band of wonderful men. And so realistic had these tales been made that now he was thinking of them by day, and dreaming of them by night; and the Knights of the Round Table were fast becoming real flesh and blood to the lad's mind.

Mother Dear had been very careful to emphasize the virtues of those men of olden times, so to-day Laddie was trying to see just how nearly he measured up to the standard. Mother Dear

had said to be like them he must be *brave*. Well, for a long time now he had gone to bed alone, and when he pounded his finger yesterday he did not cry—at least not much.

And he must be *truthful*. Yes, that virtue was his also; for hadn't he confessed at once when questioned about the disappearance of the loaf sugar?

Also he must be *strong*. Laddie was a bit dubious about this. He closed his fist tightly and bent his arm slowly. Yes, there was quite a little muscle there—anybody could see that—though not so large as it would be at the end of the summer. He ran to a mirror and climbing a chair studied the reflection within. Then he laughed with joy as he compared the little, pale, puny-looking child he had been, with the red-cheeked, sunburned, fast-growing, sturdy lad of to-day. He was a *real* boy now. And so he claimed that virtue also.

And he must be *good*. Laddie deliberated over this for quite a while and then decided that he was good, but not *too* good—and let it go at that.

But those brave men had also *punished tyrants*, and Laddie had to give this some thought; for he had never punished anything in his life, and

how was he to begin? He thought of all his pets living at Happy Days, but he could not punish one of them—of that he felt quite sure. But neither were they tyrants, so that would not do in any case. But how could he play the part of King Arthur unless he fulfilled all the conditions? Oh! If he could only find some tyrants—yes, just one tyrant—he would do things to him. Every moment his courage was mounting higher and his eyes were eagerly searching for the enemy, but nothing appeared.

He went out on the porch where Dickum was lying, and, confiding his dilemma to him, asked if he knew of any tyrants that should be killed.

“Yes, flies,” answered Dickum, snapping his jaws savagely. “They bite me all the time. I wish you would kill some of them.”

“Flies? Huh!” snorted Laddie, contemptuously. “I want some great, big tyrants,” and off he went, leaving Dickum to resume his interrupted nap.

He found Daddie sitting under a shade tree near the house, idly whittling on a stick. Mother Dear was near by in a low rocker, busily working on a pair of small trousers which had come to grief the day before.

Laddie threw himself down on the grass de-

jectedly. "O dear! I do wish I could fight some tyrants. I almost *know* I could lick 'em; but I have hunted and hunted and cannot find one."

"What would you fight them with?" asked Daddie, smiling quizzically. "Those fists of yours, though grimy, are still rather small."

"Why, I would fight them with—. Say, Mother Dear, what did King Arthur have to fight with? Did he use his fists?"

"'Thereon hangs a tale,' as usual," said Daddie, laughing merrily. "Mother Dear, neither Laddie nor I can ever be happy again until you tell us all about 'Excalibur,' King Arthur's mysterious and wonderful sword."

Now Daddie loved Mother Dear's stories almost as well as Laddie; and they both listened intently to the tale that was old to the one and new to the other, but so very interesting to both as it fell from Mother Dear's lips.

Yes, Laddie listened; but he was watching the stick in Daddie's hands, for it was fast assuming a strange but very fascinating shape.

The story and the stick were both completed at the same time, and Laddie's cup of happiness almost ran over when Daddie put a strong, wooden sword—with crosspiece and broad blade—into his hands and said: "There is *your* 'Excali-

bur.' And there are tyrants still that need punishing, but you must find them for yourself."

Laddie dashed away, flinging a "Thank you, Daddie," back over his shoulder. Oh, he could almost see those tyrants! They must be hiding in the barn. So to the barn he turned his flying feet; but before he had reached it, Dickum had joined him—for this looked as though there were going to be some fun.

Laddie was now King Arthur, leading his band of noble knights, and the barn was a strong castle. Many men would be needed to storm it and capture the wicked tyrants within. He must place his knights at all points of egress, so that none might escape; then he would deal with them one by one—single-handed. Accordingly he sent twenty-five of his faithful band to the rear, twenty-five more to guard a window, some were to remain behind a near-by tree where they would be so well concealed; and soon the whole one hundred and fifty had been placed and the castle was safely surrounded. O yes, he must do something with Dickum, though he was not quite sure the real King Arthur would have approved of dogs. Well, Dickum should be his faithful bodyguard, and he would place him at the big main door to guard that entrance.

All was now ready, so Laddie called to the tyrants to come out and meet him in open battle—but no one responded.

“Stay there, my faithful one,” he commanded Dickum, “while I see that all is safe in the rear, for I fear me they are escaping by the back door. But their scalps shall soon be hanging from my belt,” for in his excitement Indians and knights became all the same.

But Dickum was not accustomed to staying behind when his master was disappearing from sight; so he, too, tore away to help defend that back door.

Alas! No one was in sight. It was fairly heartbreaking. Not a tyrant.

Just then Dickum called attention to a big buzzing coming from the pile of horse manure lying outside that little rear barn door. “Here are your tyrants, Laddie! Strike off their heads! Hurry!”

“Keep still, Dickum. Those are only flies. They are too small to ever become tyrants. But I wonder what they are doing? I never saw so many flies before. Why, I believe there are thousands of them. I guess I’d better watch them,” and he drew Dickum to a discreet distance, but not so far but that they could see and hear all that went on.



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They evidently had arrived just in time. There were big flies, little flies, and medium-sized flies; but apart from that they all looked the same. They were all busily taking places, and they seemed to select them carefully. He noticed also they all faced one way. And now, as the last fly in sight placed himself, they silently waited. Laddie waited also.

There was a large stiff straw protruding for a distance from the top of the heap. Could it be that the flies were gazing so intently at a mere straw?

Just then several flies flew up and took places on this same piece of straw. One of these now came forward and buzzed loudly for order, though it really was not necessary. Then he spoke in a clear, shrill voice:

“As chairman of this meeting, and in behalf of the flies of Happy Days Farm to which I also belong, I wish to extend a cordial welcome to all those who have come from neighboring farms to attend this Congress; and I wish also to congratulate you upon being present at the most important gathering ever held in all the annals of fly history. We shall hear discussed by eminent authorities vital questions that concern not only our immediate present, but also the

future welfare of our race. It may be we shall find there is no real cause for alarm. On the other hand, we may be called upon to wage war. But we will decide nothing until we have given the whole matter due consideration. We seek wisdom from those who have carefully studied this matter from various standpoints. Therefore I ask you to listen carefully—with an open mind and a retentive memory—to all that may be said.

“The first speaker comes to us with a message which will strike the keynote of the day. She also represents all that we hold most sacred; for she is not only the mother of many children, but she is also a grandmother—a thing which, as we all know, is seldom permitted to one of our race. She has attained this highest of all honors by reason of her great age; for alas! our days are usually all too few. Therefore I take great pleasure in presenting to you—Mrs. Longlife, of Greenacre Farm.”

A very old fly, with torn wings and wrinkled skin, appeared before them on the speaker's stand. She spoke in the same high-pitched voice as the chairman; but her tones, though feeble, carried so well all could easily hear.

“Friends—and I might almost say, my chil-

dren: I am indeed one of the very few who live to see the second generation, for I was shut by accident in a human closet where conditions were just right for me to hibernate through the winter. We all know from fly tradition that the humans have completely changed their attitude towards us in recent years. Flies used to be treated with indifference. To-day one never feels safe. In the good old days, if a fly was killed, it was because he had made himself obnoxious to some human; but now we are slain by the hundreds, and for no apparent reason at all. In those days, all garbage was thrown out where flies could help themselves freely. To-day, it is carefully covered in tin cans, or otherwise protected; and then, to complete their meanness, the humans burn it. Of course, it may be only a fad with them, but it is a very dangerous fad for us. Our food supply is becoming sadly limited, and we have to depend largely upon what we can get from our animal friends, or steal in human houses. In those same old days the filth piles, in which we so much like to lay our eggs, were left unmolested. To-day we can no longer consider them a safe place for our babies. These are critical days with us. What has caused the humans to change so towards us, and how can we

get them to return to their former indifference, are questions I hope to hear answered at this Congress. And though I may not live to see this return brought about, I wish you all possible success. And now, in closing, I leave you—one and all—my blessing,” and amid much applause she left the platform.

“The next speaker,” began the chairman as the noise died away, “is one of the greatest scientists in all flydom. He is one who thinks independently, and has arrived at some conclusions, through living with human scientists, which may surprise many here to-day. I now introduce Professor Wiseacre — scientist — of Rosedale Institute.”

Professor Wiseacre took his place and at once began: “I agree perfectly with Mrs. Longlife that these are critical days with us. You may not know that certain humans are devoting their lives to the study of all insects, and necessarily we flies come in for our share of attention. These humans have rooms all fitted up with apparatus to make such study easy and accurate in Rosedale Institute, which I represent. They have captured large numbers of flies from time to time, in order to learn our habits. They have studied our way of living; our feeding—

what, how much, and how often; our egg-laying, and our flying about. They have watched to see just how long it takes our babies to develop in the egg; how long to hatch; the number of days spent in the larval and pupal stages; and how old these young flies must be before they, too, can begin egg-laying.

“Now of course we do not object to being studied and understood, but we do object to needless slaughter; for in those rooms hundreds of our race have been sacrificed to human science. They have been cut up with very sharp knives, and then examined under powerful microscopes, which enable humans to see a thousand times as well as we can.

“And now, as the result of all this study, the humans believe us to be the carriers of certain diseases to which they are subject. But there is one disease, called typhoid, which they feel sure we carry to them. They say we get the germs of this disease from filth piles, and take them unconsciously to their food and milk, which then make them sick.

“Now it is true we do go from a filth pile, or a bit of refuse, directly into their homes and walk upon their food, and perhaps we do in this way carry germs to them. But if these germs cause

disease, I firmly believe it is because the humans are a degenerate species of animal, living in houses, wearing clothes, and eating only cooked food. It is my opinion that this unnatural mode of life alone causes their sickness. If not, why shouldn't we flies get this disease? Their belief is absurd, you see. Of course they explain this by saying we flies are immune, which is only a word they have coined to cover up their ignorance; for a germ is a germ, whether eaten by a fly or a human.

"But if this disease is caused by their way of living, then humans who live unnatural lives will have it, and flies will not. Am I not right?" And he paused to wipe the perspiration from his head with his front feet, while the shouts of approval which came from his listeners showed the audience to be in fullest sympathy with him.

He continued: "Now it is because of this belief that the humans have come to hate us more than they do any other living creature. And they think the only way to stamp out this disease is by exterminating our species. It is a bigger question than seeking an easy way to live—it is a question of life itself. The humans are already working, cunningly and systematically, on plans which, if carried out, will end

our race. I trust some of the other speakers can suggest a scheme whereby we may either be able to protect ourselves, or to convince the humans of our innocence in this matter, and so restore our former untarnished reputation." And he closed abruptly.

The chairman again spoke: "We all know that the fly has many enemies. Take those of the house-fly, for instance. We all dread the fungous diseases. And daily we are in danger from spiders, ants, wasps, garden toads, and other creatures. But we know the ways of these enemies, and so can guard against them. But the ways of man are always new, and exceedingly difficult to cope with. I will now ask Mr. Wise Experience, of Long Hill Farm, to tell us a few of the things we may expect from this, our greatest enemy."

The new speaker came forward with a quick, nervous movement and all through his speech seemed continually on the point of flying away; but, remembering in time, he would pull himself together with wonderful control, and continue.

"Comrades: I am a nervous wreck; but the story I have been asked to relate will explain my present condition.

"As a larva I was perfectly happy crawling

about the filth pile in search of food. After a few days I became sleepy; so I wriggled down about two inches below the surface of the pile where the fermentation made it good and warm, and, making a blanket of my own skin, began my nice, long nap. When I awoke, I burst my blanket and emerged a full-grown fly. Now, rested and hungry, I crawled up along a straw till I reached the surface, sucking up small bits of refuse as I went,—helping to clean the world up, you see, even before I had seen the sunlight. At the top the sun shone warmly, and good things to eat were spread around me in every direction. At first I could suck up only the fluids, but soon I learned to spit some of my saliva on a bit of food, dissolve the good out of it, and then suck the whole back through my proboscis. I had not yet heard of these humans, and bore no ill will towards any living thing. My life-work, which I knew instinctively was to be that of a scavenger, appealed to me as being a very useful one. I resolved to make the world cleaner for my having lived in it; and supposed, of course, all inhabitants would grant me the privilege of doing my duty and living my life unmolested. Alas for the ideals of youth!

“Well, I did not stop eating until my food

crop was full. Then my wings attracted my attention; and trying them, my first flight brought me up to the barn door. I smelled the cows stabled within, where the farmer was busily milking one of them. Soon I was drawn to a pail of milk standing on the floor. I did not know it was something the humans had reserved for themselves, but thinking it only something more to be cleaned up, I flew to the edge of the pail. I crawled quickly down the side till I could reach the milk with the end of my proboscis, and then sucked it up as fast as I could. It was delicious. Soon there were a number of flies doing the same thing. When we had had all we wanted, we crawled up to the edge of the pail and proceeded to clean up our bodies and brush off some of the filth we had unconsciously gathered, and I must admit much of this fell down into the milk. But why should we suppose the farmer would object to that any more than we would?

“Just then the man picked up the pail and walked away with it. I buzzed angrily about his head, for I had intended to return to that milk soon for more food, but he paid no attention to me. Now for the first time I realized how helpless I was. I had no teeth, no hoofs, and no

poisonous sting. I approached a fly standing near and questioned him: 'Why should that milk have been taken away before we were through cleaning it up? And how can we protect ourselves against such indignities?'

"'Oh, that milk was not meant for us, and it was not placed there for us to clean up at all, but for the farmer's convenience. You are very young yet and must learn to steal your food from the humans, for you will find it to be much better than anything you can obtain in any other way. We flies used to be scavengers, but that way of living is entirely out of date now. Our wings are our only protection; but we can fly so quickly we need fear the humans only as they outwit us with their superior brains.'

"Not any too well pleased with this information, I flew outside. I stopped at the watering trough to suck up a little saliva that one of the cows had brushed off of her mouth before entering the barn. Next I found a small mud puddle in the yard and near it lay a dead worm. This was another choice find. Several other flies had been there before me, but there was still plenty left. But though I had gone back to my scavenger work, I had not forgotten what my friend had said about stealing my food from the humans.

And now I began to notice a strong odor that was being wafted to me. I was sure it came from the human house and it smelled as though it meant something good to eat. I started immediately to trace the source of the odor and soon reached the kitchen door. I saw a place on the ground by the step where the farmer had been spitting, so down I went to have a suck of this before going inside.

"Perhaps I did get my feet a little dirty with it, but it was human dirt and they surely could not object to that. And if the humans would only keep the food they do throw out clean, instead of putting it into dirty, decaying barrels or old tin cans, perhaps we would not carry so much dirt with us when we go into their houses."

Here the buzz of applause became so loud the speaker was compelled to pause for a moment, and he took the opportunity to dust off his belly with his hind legs.

Then he continued: "When I had finished I flew up to the door; but though I could look into the kitchen I could not enter, because it was screened. There were about two hundred flies on that door, all anxious to get inside. I asked the fly nearest me if that tempting smell meant anything good to eat, and he said it meant boiled

cabbage and that flies loved it very much. Then I asked how we could get to it, for the door was closed. He said wait until a human went in or came out, and then to dart through quickly while the door was open. It was not long before the farmer opened the door to come out, and as he did so quite a number of us were smart enough to dash in safely. I flew directly towards the cabbage, but found it was still on the stove cooking. I resolved to wait. On the table was a new loaf of cake. It had nice, thick cream on top; so down I flew, and, in my eagerness, landed with all six feet right in the middle of it. I crawled slowly over to the edge, feeding as I went and leaving a trail behind me.

“By this time other flies had joined me, and as we all cleaned our feet thoroughly in that cream I suppose the humans would not think we had improved it any. But what did we care?

“Soon a woman caught sight of us and brushed us angrily away. She said we had spoiled the looks of the cake, but apart from that I don’t think she objected.

“I then flew down by the stove and gradually worked my way over to the wood-box. I was still waiting for some of that cabbage. Soon I heard one woman call to another to come and

help her. She said: 'Let's kill these pesky flies off before dinner, for the kitchen is full of them.' So the two women started after the flies. I laughed, remembering our swift wings, but I had entirely forgotten that screen door. That was one of man's traps for us. To keep us out or keep us in, was all one to him, it seemed. I wondered what we would do. Each woman now had a wire broom and I could hear them go spat! spat! and each time the life was crushed out of one of my comrades.

"I was very much frightened now, and crawled 'way down to the bottom of the wood-box. It was a very good place to hide in, as I have proved many times since, for no one ever thinks of looking for us there. It is lucky for us that the humans forget quickly, as owing to that I escaped safely a short time later. But what I saw on my way out was like a battlefield where many of my comrades' lives had been sacrificed. O, friends! never forget that the odor of cabbage is the bait, and the screen door the trap, by which we may be ensnared at any time. And even yet I cannot forget that it was a deliberate slaughter.

"I wish to relate another instance of extreme cruelty on the part of the humans; for it shows they are not content even to kill us outright,

but like to torture us first. Only yesterday I entered a house a little way down the road from here. I had gone in to see what I could find to eat; for after all what the humans make for themselves is much better than what they throw out as garbage, and I long ago fell into the habit of eating in their houses whenever possible. Well, there on the table lay a sheet of paper apparently covered with an extra nice kind of molasses. It was spread out invitingly, and I saw several flies already there. I flew directly towards it and was about to alight when one of the flies cried out, 'Don't come here! It is a trap!' I flew down beside it and now saw that most of the flies on it were tightly stuck to the paper. The molasses was nothing but a sweetened kind of mucilage to tempt us, and if we once touched it with but a single leg we would be held fast. And then—a slow death follows. I saw where one fly had alighted on the paper near the edge. As he could put some of his feet on a place where there was no mucilage, he pulled himself free and so escaped—but he left two legs behind him. Can you think of anything more horrible? Only man is able to devise such cruelties. Then there are all sorts of cages to catch us in, and poison spread out for us to eat.

We have to be on our guard constantly these days.

“One more incident and I will close. You flies on Happy Days Farm know nothing of the diabolical spirit that possesses many boys. One day I got caught with some others in a house, and we were trying to get out through a substance we could look through perfectly well but could not crawl through. I never yet have been able to understand how one can see so clearly through this thing the humans call glass, and still be held a prisoner. We were all trying to find a way out when a small boy came up, and, making a cup of his hand, with a sweeping movement managed to catch one of our number. He pulled off a wing; and then, not satisfied, he pulled off another. He next set the poor fly down to see what it would do. Of course there was little to be done, for we are not much good without our wings. Soon tiring of this, he started pulling off the fly's legs one at a time, until, at last, all six were gone. I supposed he would then kill the rest of the body, but no! he spied another fly and left the half dead one to perish as it would. The second fly suffered the fate of the first; so did the third. The boy evidently was enjoying himself, for he kept on until he had tortured

seven. I knew that my turn must come soon, and I was now trying harder than ever to find a way through that glass, when the boy's mother came into the room.

"What are you doing here?" she demanded.

"Oh, just killing flies!" he answered coolly.

"I expected to hear her reprimand him severely; but instead she said: 'Well, you go fill that wood-box as I told you to, then you can come back and have your fun.'

"I wonder if cruel children don't *always* have cruel mothers. As he went through the door I darted through, too; and once more my life was saved. But all of these experiences have made me what you see—a nervous wreck. O, friends, do something, I beg of you, to save the race before it is too late!"

A prolonged burst of applause followed his closing words.

And now the chairman came forward with what he thought would be a pleasant surprise.

"I have just received word that there is one present to-day who considers taking radical measures to cope with this matter entirely unnecessary. Now, as we are willing to hear this question discussed in all its phases, I beg to be

allowed to call to the stand for a few minutes—Mr. Makepeace, of Maple Grove Farm.”

Mr. Makepeace flew up to a place on the speaker's stand. He was a long and very slim fly, and apparently not such a high liver as some of the more prosperous flies present. But he was perfectly calm and composed, and, in contrast to the last speaker, seemed not to have a nerve in his body. He began at once to plead with the audience:

“Fellow flies: I have come a long way to attend this Congress and have been much interested in all that has been said; and because of long training and a peace-loving disposition I am enabled to listen without the prejudice and excitement that so many of you are manifesting. But in all of your arguments there is a grave fallacy, which I wish to point out to you. You are working on the assumption that flies are the most important creatures in the universe, while the humans make that same claim for themselves. Of course, I believe neither is right, but that we both have our own work to do and our own places to fill. And I also believe it is because we are not keeping to our work that all this trouble has arisen. I do not doubt the humans have been studying our habits, and so have learned much

about us. However, I am sure this study was not begun with the idea of exterminating us at all, but merely to classify us in the insect scale. But what did they soon find? They learned we were no longer keeping to our place in life, but were becoming a nuisance and even a menace to them.

"Now when a farmer's wife, after cooking cabbage, slays numbers of our fellows, it is not, as has been stated, a trap; because she cares little whether a hundred more or less of us live or die. She probably cooks the cabbage because she likes the odor of it herself, and would be much better pleased if no fly came to visit her. But those who come she kills, as that is the easiest and perhaps the only way to get rid of us; for we are most persistent.

"It is true the humans are now looking after their garbage and refuse more carefully than ever before. That is largely because they dislike the sight and odor of decaying matter; but it is also because flies—thousands of them—quickly congregate on all such matter. And then, not being content with feeding outside, they seek to find a way into human houses, carrying much of this filth—which the humans abhor—in with them, and so directly to the

human food. The humans do not object to our having all the food we want, but we must be content to let *their* food alone. That is the whole thing in a nutshell."

The audience was showing signs of restlessness, and even a few hisses could be heard. But the speaker continued only more earnestly than ever:

"You will remember the preceding speaker admitted he was interfered with only when he tried to steal food from the humans. From the milk-pail and the cake he was driven away; but at the dead worm, the sputum, and the filth pile he was unmolested.

"And what is the conclusion? It is very simple. If you let the humans alone, they will let you alone. Now as to why they stir up the filth piles to prevent our eggs from hatching. Again I say it is to exterminate you only because the moment you can fly, you go right into their houses where they consider you a nuisance. By killing you early they are saved the bother of killing you later, and with much less trouble to themselves. As I have already said, the change is in you. Year by year you are becoming more dependent on the humans. You are no longer satisfied with mere garbage, but must have frosted cake as well.

"Perhaps someone is thinking: 'What if they do kill me? Isn't it better to die in a human house with a crop full of frosted cake, than to live one's life in a garbage pail?' I will answer him in the words of a human: 'Dead flies are good to take along when you go fishing.' Surely they are good for little else. So there you are!

"Then, too, you are no longer willing to endure the cold as best you can; for a rainy day or cold weather sends you flocking to the human houses, determined to be warm at any cost. The course for us to pursue, then, is very obvious. It is not one of war, for the humans are not really our enemies; but you must return to your old habits and become scavengers once more. If you keep out of their houses, you will find the humans will cease trying to kill you."

Now indignant remarks were heard upon all sides.

"Again, you could never cope with the humans in open war. You must realize that fully, before you take the decisive step. Only a few miles from here is a large city where many, many thousands of humans are living. For all we know there may be many such cities.

"The humans also have another advantage over us; for, although we are born in large numbers,

the vast majority of us perish before we mature, and the length of our lives is as nothing compared to that of the humans. Just think of it—they live many years, while we usually live but a few days! Such a war can lead to nothing but our own extermination. Friends, in closing, I beg you to join me in the cleaning up work which really belongs to us to do, and let the humans occupy their houses in peace. If not——”

But now the tumult and angry shouts of “Put him out!” “Stop him!” entirely drowned his words. Then the chairman darted down at him so suddenly, he concluded it better to withdraw.

The chairman had now to pacify the angry audience.

“My dear friends—I do not blame you for being offended by suggestions so revolting, and I feel I owe you a sincere apology. Had I known Mr. Makepeace’s conservative ideas, needless to say he would never have been called to this stand. And now let us forget him in listening to our next speaker, who is one of our best egg-layers, and who has given much thought to the rearing of the young,—Mrs. Prolific, President of the Mothers’ Club, who will speak in the interest of the Child Welfare Movement.”

Mrs. Prolific, who proved to be a very rapid speaker, could hardly wait to take her place before commencing.

"While you males are worrying about such trivial things as whether to eat frosted cake or dead worms, we females are having more important questions to trouble us. How can you carry on a war unless we mothers furnish new flies to take the place of those who will be slain, and how can we provide these young flies unless we can rear them in safety? Therefore it behooves you to listen to me more carefully than to any of the other speakers here.

"The very first thing for us to consider is the expediency of finding a new place for our egg-laying. As you well know, flies like to lay eggs in filth of all kinds, but we house-flies always prefer the horse-filth pile to anything else. Now these piles are becoming less in number each year, fly history tells us, and it is because the humans are fast exchanging horses for automobiles. But many of those who still keep horses have learned that stirring up the pile frequently, kills the eggs we have so carefully laid; for we place these eggs in the most favorable environment, and any meddling is necessarily disastrous. So to-day we find it no longer

safe to lay our eggs in the old, beloved places. Human filth used to be a good place also; but often now that is not accessible to us, and it becomes less so each year. Must we take refuge in such places as decaying grass in swamps—places that no self-respecting fly a few generations ago would have considered for a moment? I say, No. The filth pile is ours. It belonged to our race long before the first human appeared on earth. Fly tradition has emphasized that fact.

“Are you going to allow us to be forced to abandon it now? Is there no way to save your wives from such disgrace? This should be the burning question with you to-day. I do not believe in war—no female does; but if we must have it, let us fight for something worth while.

“I have been kindly referred to as being one of the best egg-layers because I always lay one hundred and fifty eggs at a time, while many mothers only lay one hundred and twenty. Now are not these little, white eggs dear enough to you to make you see that we are provided with a safe and respectable place in which to lay them? Are not the larvæ—the active, little worms which come from the eggs—of interest to modern male flies? Are you, then, so cold-hearted, that the thought of our little pupæ sleeping in their

blankets will not move you to action? Are you, as Mr. Makepeace has said, interested only in keeping your crops full of human food? If you still love your children and your wives, then prove it by providing us with as respectable places in which to deposit our eggs as our ancestors had. I have spoken."

She ceased in a perfect tumult of applause. "We will!" "We will!" shrilled the large audience as one fly. They were profoundly moved. She came again to the front to bow her acknowledgments, and, holding up one leg to command silence, asserted, "We want deeds, not words," and retired to make way for the next speaker, whom the chairman was now waiting to introduce.

"I am sure the plea that has just been made touched the hearts of all, and it leads us directly to the great question: *Shall we declare war?* We have heard a few arguments against it, but I hardly think they impressed anyone strongly. But I wish all to be firmly convinced that it is only by declaring war now that we can hope to live in peace in the future. And success is not only possible to us, but I think it will not even be as difficult to attain as might appear. Our next and last speaker has come prepared to outline a

strenuous campaign. After we have heard his plan, we will decide whether or not we shall have war, by putting it to the vote. Therefore listen carefully, and later be ready for the question;—General Fixit, of Hardscrabble Farm.”

General Fixit was a large, energetic specimen of his race, and his dignified manner made a deep impression upon all.

“Fellow workers: I am sure we now realize that danger surrounds us. Three points have been made very clear to us. First, our eggs are no longer safe. Next, our food supply is becoming limited. And last, if we go into human houses for the food we all like so well, we are in danger of torture and even death. Now, we *must* live, we *must* eat, and we *must* keep the race going. How can we accomplish all this? Only in one way—by *war*. We need not fear defeat, for I assure you we shall be able to completely annihilate these humans. I know it can be done, for I have often heard the humans themselves discuss this matter.

“As we already know, there is a certain disease called typhoid fever which humans contract by eating germs in their food. These germs are little, worm-like creatures, so small we cannot see them; but they live their lives just as we do,

and multiply very fast. Suppose I had here on this straw, a germ. In, say, half an hour, it would divide and become two germs. Then these two would divide and become four, and they would keep this up indefinitely. So you see we are sure of plenty of fighting material. Having so many germs we will use them lavishly, though just one germ is sufficient to make a human sick enough to die. So you see how easy the whole thing will be.

“As to obtaining these germs, I can help you out there, for I am glad to say we have a typhoid case on our farm at the present time. This is indeed fortunate for us. Now, humans sick with this disease have these germs every day in their excretions, and since they are not as cleanly as they pretend to be, they usually get some of them on their skin or bed clothing. This is very important to remember, in case the excretions are put where we cannot possibly reach them, as the humans sometimes try to do. But at Hardscrabble, I am glad to say, the humans are not being at all particular. They have not even heard of these new ideas; and so these excretions are thrown out on the ground, where they are accessible to all of us. And where the humans can be kept in ignorance, it will always make it much easier for us.

"Now, I suggest that a delegation, consisting of ten members from each farm represented here, visit me to-morrow at Hardscrabble. Such a large delegation will make us perfectly sure of good results, and I will guarantee to furnish all the germs these delegates can possibly carry home with them.

"As to how to carry them, that is very simple and can be done in two ways. First, we will all eat of the excrement, as we can pass these germs through our bodies undigested and as active as ever. And then, as we eat, we will walk in it and so get our bodies covered.

"Then as to the best way to administer the fatal dose. The only essential thing is to see that the humans swallow it. The very best way is to put the germs in cow's milk, because milk causes them to multiply faster than anything else that I know of. So upon reaching home, these delegates must go immediately to the milk-pails, pitchers, and glasses, and brush the germs from their bodies into these receptacles, either before the milk is poured or after. Washing their feet in the milk would also be a very good thing for them to do. The germs will multiply so fast in milk that in a few hours there will be millions of them.

"And then the humans will drink it. For a time they will seem to be all right, but after about ten days they will become sick; and then they grow worse each day, until perhaps they die. But I am sorry to say some of them will recover, notwithstanding all our efforts. For them, we will have to find another kind of disease germ—of which the humans say there are many—and the second time I am sure we shall be successful.

"But this typhoid is a long, slow disease. The humans very much dread it, so we will make them live in constant fear of us. And, remember, a good many will die of it. So it is our duty, then, to start this war at once, and our children will carry it on. We must be persistent; and persistency, which is said to be our chief characteristic, will stand us in good stead now. I trust this appeals to all as being a simple and most effective remedy, and that you are now ready to take action in this vital matter."

A breathless suspense seemed to hang over the audience. Not even a buzz was heard. Amid intense silence the chairman came forward to put the question.

"Friends, what we are about to do must be done carefully and with much forethought. I

am sure everyone present has been convinced that, for our own preservation and especially for our children's safety, we should exterminate these humans. But we will call for a vote. Fellow flies—are you ready for the great question? All those in favor of beginning a war for the extermination of the humans by means of the typhoid germ, will please——”

“Laddie! O, Laddie! Supper!” And Daddie appeared on the scene. Dickum sprang up joyously, loudly barking his welcome, and rushing around as madly as usual.

“Why, what in the world are you doing out here?” Daddie questioned.

Laddie did not reply for a moment. He was trying so hard to hear the answer to the great question. To his surprise the flies were fast disappearing, and soon not one more could he see. Had Dickum frightened them away by his noise, or had there been a tremendous shout of approval, shrilled so high his ear could not catch it? It was really too bad to miss the climax.

The boy turned disappointedly away. “O, I have been watching the flies.—And, Daddie, I am never, never going to forget and leave the screen-door open again. I mean it this time, truly.”

"A most excellent resolve, my boy. May your memory never desert you in time of need. But I think you can find a somewhat sweeter and cleaner place to play in than out here back of the barn."

"But sometimes, Daddie, that is just the place to look for wicked tyrants. They always seem to be in places where a fellow wouldn't think of looking for them. Well, my work is all cut out for me—and for Excalibur too."

Daddie laughed tolerantly, as though it were all a good joke.

But, remember, Daddie had not attended the Congress of Tyrants.

'Tis a bird I love, with its brooding note,
And the trembling throb in its mottled throat.

WILLIS



Come to me, O ye children!
And whisper in my ear
What the birds and the winds are singing
In your sunny atmosphere.

LONGFELLOW.

QUESTIONS

THE weeks that were passing so rapidly were working a wonderful change in Laddie, and the Old Doctor's heart would surely have been gladdened now by the sight of the boy. This new Laddie was alive all over—really alive for the first time in his life. The good food and pure air, as well as the free life he was living, had seen to that. His skin was healthy-looking, his eyes clear, and O, how he did eat! He could also take Dickum all over the farm without getting very tired, and he had learned many, many things that of course all farmers should know.

And now, after his regular afternoon nap, he was sitting on the kitchen doorstep eating a big molasses cookie, when a bird flew down and commenced to pick up the bits he had dropped on the ground.

"O, a pigeon!" cried Laddie, happily.

"Yes, and I have come for some of your nice crumbs, if you don't mind," answered the bird,

much to Laddie's surprise. Birds *could* talk, then, after all.

"Will you have a piece of my cookie also?" offered the boy, hospitably. "There are plenty more; for to-day is baking-day."

"No, thank you. These crumbs suit me better." It was not till the last vestige had disappeared that the bird looked up at Laddie. "To tell you the truth I did not come so much for the crumbs as to give you a chance to get acquainted with me if you wanted to. You are always so busy, it is almost impossible to find you quiet like this."

"I am awfully glad you want to know me, and I have always meant to get acquainted with you sometime; but, as you say, I am very busy. I am so glad to find you can talk though. I began to be afraid you couldn't. I have fed you for a long time now, and I never heard any of you pigeons speak before."

"Perhaps you forgot to *listen carefully*," said the pigeon, remindingly.

"Oh! do you think that was it?" asked the boy, remorsefully. "Well, I promise to do better after this, and then perhaps you will all talk to me. Do you know, I remember when you came here to live?"

"Yes, and so do I, Laddie; I shall never forget that day. It was the happiest time of my life, and I have been happy ever since. I tell you, Happy Days is a nice name for our home."

"Yes, I think so, too, for everything is so interesting here."

"O, I don't mean that! Happy Days is an appropriate name because we all feel so safe. No one will harm or frighten us here."

"I should say not," answered Laddie, indignantly. "And nowhere else for that matter. Why, no one would harm nice, pretty birds like you."

"Oh! wouldn't they though? I might have believed that if I had been born on Happy Days, but you see I cannot forget my past. I had some hard times before I finally found this place, Laddie."

"Won't you tell me about it?" begged the boy.

"Yes, I am willing to; but it is a very long story, and you might get tired before I finished."

Laddie laughed. "I guess you don't know me, for I *never* get tired of stories. But first, what is your name?"

"Questions. You see I have always wanted to know things."

"I do, too; so I am sure we will be good friends. But where was your home before you came here? On another farm like this? Tell me about it; do, please."

"All right, if you will come out and sit on the grass while I perch on the clothes-post, for that is a favorite place of mine, and I don't care to stay on the ground very long at a time."

The pigeon led the way, and, when they were both nicely settled, began:

"I was born in a city, just like you; but it was a bird city. My home was a little room not quite two feet square, and about nine inches high. There were no windows, and all the light we had came through a small door. I had a brother, and we sat by ourselves all day in our little nest of twigs—which was all the furniture we had—for Father and Mother had to be away most of the time finding food. Once our nest had been nice and clean, but I am afraid Brother and I were not as careful to keep it so as we should have been, for it soon became very dirty. Indeed, you humans call us pigeons very dirty creatures; but we were then so



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ASTOR LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATION

small and weak we could not move about much.

“When my parents fed me, they had no bowl and spoon with which to mix my gruel; and so they would eat wheat, corn, or bran, and mix it up in their stomachs for me. Father fed me oftener than Mother, and he did so by putting his bill into my mouth, flapping his wings, and pouring the food right down my throat. You would have thought the days Brother and I spent in that dark little room very long and lonely, but we did not mind it. I never cried much, except when I was hungry.

“At night Father sat on his roost outside, in order to keep other pigeons from taking possession of his property; but Mother always slept with us to keep us warm, and before we went to sleep she would tell us stories about the outside world which we had never seen. How I did long to see the glorious sun that Mother said lighted the world so wonderfully, the beautiful green trees, and the hundreds of other pigeons which lived in that great bird city of ours! I also longed to eat wheat for myself, and to drink the pure water out of the little brook that flowed through our city. But Mother said I must be patient a few days more till my wings grew large

and strong, and then I could fly and see things for myself.

“Mother was always very good to us, and told us many stories which I have always remembered, and which have saved my life many, many times. She told us how to eat, how to fly and walk, and never, never to let any of you humans touch us; ‘because,’ she said, ‘if a human gets you, you are taken away, and no one ever sees you again.’ Mother did not know where the captured pigeons were taken, but she did not think it could be a nice place, because they were not handled kindly. She also told us we would lose all our self-respect if we allowed ourselves to be handled. Then, too, it would spoil our feathers, and she wanted us to have beautiful ones like hers. She was pure white except for a little black spot on her breast, and was one of the prettiest pigeons in our city.

“So I grew stronger every day and waited for the time to come when I could fly outside. But Brother was not like me. He did not want to fly, nor eat wheat; he did not even want to see the sun. All he cared for was to sit in the nest and be fed, and have Mother tell him stories.

“And so the days were happy and uneventful,

till one day I heard something which scared me terribly. Father and Mother were talking just outside, and I could not help hearing what they said. Mother was speaking in a frightened tone:

“‘What do you suppose they do with all of our children when they take them away?’

“‘I can’t imagine,’ replied Father. ‘I only know they are handled roughly and carried away with others in a bag.’

“‘Do you suppose they will take ours to-day?’ she asked anxiously.

“‘I don’t think so,’ answered Father, ‘for they are working down at the other end of the pen; and as they come only twice a week, I think you can be sure of your babies a few days longer. But you should urge them to begin learning to fly, at once; for you must sit on our new eggs to-night.’

“‘I suppose so,’ said Mother; ‘but I do hate to leave them—especially Questions. He is certainly bright, and tries very hard to learn. He is always so thoughtful and loving too.’

“‘O, that is what you say about all your children! But they are six weeks old to-day, and are perfectly able to take care of themselves. As long as we keep feeding them they will stay in

the nest and not try to fly. But if you would let them get real hungry once, they would learn to get their own food quick enough. What would you do if you had to feed all the babies you ever had?’

“‘What you say is true, I know. But somehow Questions *is* different from any of our other children,’ Mother insisted. ‘Well, I will go in and tell them I cannot sleep with them to-night.’

“‘All right; then come to our other house and sit on our new eggs,’ and Father flew away.

“Mother came through the door. I had never seen her sad before.

“‘I am going to leave you, children,’ she began; ‘for now you are both large and strong enough to take care of yourselves. To-night you must begin sleeping without me; for I have in another nest two little eggs just like those you came from, and I must now go to sit on them.’

“Brother only cried for something to eat; but I begged Mother to let me go with her to her new home, for I could not bear the thought of losing her.

“‘Your father would not allow that,’ she said; ‘but I will come to you when I can in the day-

time, for he will be sitting on the eggs then. In the meantime you must go out and try to fly. Now, children, never forget what I have told you about the life outside,' and pecking us gently with her bill she left us.

"I was now more anxious than ever to leave the nest. I flapped my wings to see how strong they were, and believed if I tried I could really fly.

"'Come, Brother,' I urged; 'let us take Mother's advice at once.'

"'I can't,' he replied. 'You are larger and stronger than I, and perhaps you can fly; but I am too weak yet. You go; only don't stay long, for I shall be lonesome without you.'

"I had little sympathy with him, for I thought he was only lazy. He had never even tried to grow as I had. Cautiously I walked over to the door and peeped out. O, it was wonderful! Such light, and fresh air; and built in the form of a square, were perhaps a thousand homes like my own. All had little doors, and in front of each door was a stoop to stand on. There were pigeons flying about everywhere.

"I stepped out upon our stoop, and saw Father standing in front of another house not far away. He soon noticed me and came flying

over. 'Good boy, Questions,' he said. 'Try to fly a little.'

"But the ground was so far away, I did not dare leave my place, and only flapped my wings. In a few minutes a human came into our city. Father said it was the boy who fed the pigeons, and in the sack he carried was wheat for us to eat. All the pigeons that had been flying outside of the pen now saw him and came hurrying home, entering the city by the little gate 'way up at the top, and soon the ground was covered with birds. Father flew gracefully down among them and began to eat. I, too, was hungry, and longed to try the wheat. Everyone was busy eating now, and no one noticed me. I flapped my wings a little; but though I felt very light, still I did not go. Brother called to me, 'Come on back. I am lonesome, and what is the use of trying to fly?'

"But I only replied, 'Come on out. Everyone is eating wheat down on the ground, and I am going down to eat too.' As he refused, however, I walked boldly to the edge, and, flapping my wings, jumped out into space. Ah! Now I remembered. Mother had said, 'Jump when you flap your wings.'

"I am afraid I did not do very well, for I did

not yet know how to steer, and landed right on top of an old, blue pigeon. He was so mad he turned around and bit me, pulling out three of my prettiest feathers. I ran over to where the wheat lay thickest and tried to eat; but it was hard for me to swallow it, and so I was very slow.

"I had eaten only a few kernels when a grouchy old fellow came along and bit me, pulling out a feather, and said: 'You kids have no business down here. Get up in the box where you belong. It's time the humans took you, anyhow.' This frightened me and I ran away, the old birds each giving me a peck as I passed them.

"I soon saw Father not far off, so I went up to him. 'Hello, Father!' I said. 'I have come to eat wheat with you.' He was pleased to see me, and made the other birds leave me alone till I had eaten all I wanted. I then thought I would try to fly again, and, picking out the stoop of a house not very high up, I flapped my wings and jumped, and before I knew it I was on the stoop. Immediately an old pigeon came out of the house and cooed, 'Get off of here, kid. This is no orphan asylum,' and giving me a hard blow with his wing he knocked me to the ground.

“When I told Father about it later, he said I must keep off of other birds’ houses and roosts, for it is pigeon etiquette to drive trespassers off your property. He showed me a roost up in the top of the pen, where he said I must sleep with him; for I was now no longer a baby, and must not think of going back to my nest. When I got strong enough to fight I could win a mate and have babies of my own; but until then if anyone tried to fight me, I must run away, and they would not chase me, for that was not pigeon etiquette. Then Father went away to sit on the eggs while Mother came out to eat, and I was alone once more.

“Father was the best fighter in our city and so claimed and held a whole roost—the highest and best one of all. It was one ’way up under the eaves, and I had to try several times before I could fly so high. When I at last succeeded in reaching it, I sat there and watched the other birds, for it was all new to me, and I had much to learn.

“Some pigeons were eating the last kernels of wheat, some were cooing sweet things to their mates, and from their boxes or roosts many males were threatening others to convince them it would not be safe to molest their property.

A few had gone outside the city, and were flying about the pen in great circles.

“Mother had now finished her supper, and, flying up to her new home, disappeared suddenly through the door. As it was now getting dark, Father came out of his house, cooed twice on his stoop as a warning to everyone to keep away, and then flew up beside me. A few minutes later all the pigeons were back in the pen. Each male flew up to his own roost, cooed a few times, and then he was joined by his mate, if she did not have eggs or babies in her nest that needed her. They then preened their feathers a bit, some of the males kissed the cheeks of their mates—for pigeons love their wives dearly—and then, as darkness came, all gradually let their legs settle under them till their feet disappeared in their breast feathers, and soon they were fast asleep.

“I could not sleep yet. I could not help thinking of all I had seen and heard since I left my nest, and how good it did seem to be a grown-up. Then I wondered about Brother alone down in the box, and if he would have courage to fly in the morning. But finally I, too, fell asleep.

“When I awoke the next morning, all the

pigeons were very much excited. They were flying about wildly, and were too frightened to keep off each other's houses as they had so carefully done the night before, for in the pen were two humans. One was the boy who fed us, the other was much larger. They opened all the houses one after another, and every baby over four weeks old was taken out and thrown into a bag, crying. I heard the man say, 'This is a big order, and we will have trouble to fill it.' So each baby was carefully examined, and only those who were much too young were left in the nest.

"'What are they doing, Father?' I cried; but he had forgotten all about me in his anxiety for Mother, the new eggs, and Brother, and he too was flying wildly about. Now they had reached our nest—mine and Brother's. The man put his hand in and grabbed Brother, who had only time to give a frightened cry when he, too, was dropped into the bag.

"Suddenly looking up, the man spied me. 'See, Boy,' he said, 'there is one up there who still has his baby feathers on his head. We should have found him a week ago. I wonder if he is now too tough? Try to catch him with the net.' The boy raised a long pole with some-

thing on the end of it, and swung it towards me. Every one was terribly frightened now, and I forgot everything and began flying as wildly as the others around the pen, for the boy with the net was after me. I flew so fast and my heart beat so hard I soon became dizzy, and then I began to fall. Fortunately I landed in a space between the houses just big enough to hold me fast. The boy tried to reach me, but he could not. 'O, well,' said the man, 'don't spend all day on one bird! Come and help me with this bunch. The mother bites like a dog.' It was a mother who was defending her babies with bill and wing, but the boy soon grabbed her and threw her out into the air, while the man snatched the two babies and dropped them into the bag.

"Now the danger to me was passed, I realized I was trembling all over, and my heart was still beating madly—much faster than human hearts are ever able to beat. I opened my mouth, gasping for breath; and then everything grew black before my eyes, my head sank on my breast, and I saw and heard no more. It is a cruel thing for humans to frighten us so. How long I remained in this condition I do not know; but when I felt I had strength to crawl out, the humans were gone and all was quiet in the pen.

Every one seemed to have forgotten the tragedy of the morning, and was as happy as ever. Pigeons usually forget quickly. But I could not forget, as I knew they would probably try again to catch me; for they could see at a glance I was not yet a grown-up, as I still had the telltale baby feathers on my head.

"I flew up to Father's roost where he sat and he was very glad to see me, for he thought I must have been caught. 'Questions,' he said, 'you must fly away to another place at once. If you stay here they will surely get you to-morrow, and they may come back to-day; for one never can tell what these so-called humans may do. After you have lost all your baby feathers, you can come back here and win a home for yourself. But you must go quickly now, while the gate is open.'

"I was too frightened to argue the matter, so I flapped my wings and jumped. Father flew with me for a short distance, giving me some parting words of advice. 'If you went the other way you would find a big human city,' he said; 'but by always flying this way, you will reach a large wood, and beyond it are many beautiful gardens. There I think you can find a place where you will be safe. So always fly away from the sun

in the morning and towards it in the afternoon, till you have left the wood behind; then you must begin to look for a home. Good-bye!' and he left me.

"I was now all alone out in the big world, but I determined to forget everything but the home I was seeking. It seemed so easy to fly now I had learned how. I soared away up into the air, higher and higher, faster and faster; and it did not make my heart beat hard now, for I was not frightened but very happy. I had to stop many times to rest, for flying was still new to me, but after a time I reached the wood.

"I enjoyed flying over the tree-tops, though I could not help thinking of poor Brother, and wondered where he was now. Was it not strange I should have left the nest just in time to escape the humans? And Brother—well, he should have listened to Mother; for she had often told him, if he did not mend his ways, his laziness would some day get him into trouble. And why did Father and Mother remain in a city where they were almost sure to lose their babies, when they knew of the nice gardens outside? It was all very mysterious.

"I flew on till I became too tired and hungry to go farther. I decided I would live here in the

woods, and not go to the gardens at all. But when I perched on a small branch of a tree, I soon discovered it moved too much in the wind to be comfortable, and the stronger branches were too large for my claws. I then flew down to the ground in search of food, but could find only a few seeds, though there were some grass, and a number of pebbles which pigeons need to eat occasionally in order to digest their food.

"Flying up to the tree-top I saw the sun was getting low, so starting off once more I flew swiftly towards it, and just as it sank out of sight I came upon an open field, with a farmhouse and other buildings standing in the midst of it. I at once noticed a small yard with wire around but not over it, so one could easily escape if danger threatened, and in that yard were some birds, much larger than I had ever seen before.

"They were eating a supper of wheat, and I decided this would be a good place to spend the night. I was so hungry I dove right down into their midst, and began to eat as fast as I could. They did not like it very well, and bit me whenever they got a chance, each time pulling out a feather. This hurt; but I soon found they were so slow I could eat several kernels and then jump

away, before they could reach me. So I had a good supper. Then I flew up to a place just above them, and was now ready to talk.

“‘What is your name?’ I asked, partly to be friendly and partly out of curiosity.

“‘I am surprised you do not know the most familiar and useful of birds,’ replied one who seemed to be the spokesman for the crowd. ‘Humans call us males, roosters; and the females, hens. I also know they call your kind pigeons, and if Master catches you around here he will shoot you.’

“‘But why can’t I stay, as well as you?’ I asked, anxiously; for it looked as if there was more trouble ahead for me.

“‘Because Master does not keep tramps,’ he answered, shortly.

“‘But why does he keep you then? Are you not a tramp too?’

“‘I would have you understand,’ he said, raising himself to his full height in order to appear dignified, ‘we belong to a very old and aristocratic family. I also beg to inform you we have done quite as much for the humans as any animal. We pay for our wheat and home with our eggs, which the humans eat.’

“‘They eat your eggs?’ I cried. ‘Then where do your children come from?’

“‘He looked at me as though he thought I was the most ignorant of birds, and with an exaggerated air of patience explained. ‘The old custom of sitting went out of fashion many years ago. Master only asks us to furnish him plenty of eggs, and then he does the rest. I know some of the eggs are eaten; but many of them are put in large incubators where they are hatched for us, and that saves us lots of work and worry, you see. Why, we are the permanent guests of the humans, and we consider it the greatest honor in the world.’ He crowed triumphantly.

“‘But don’t some of your number ever disappear?’

“‘O yes,’ he answered, carelessly. ‘Only last week several young roosters were put in a box and carried away by a human.’

“‘Where did they go?’ I asked, anxiously, for perhaps Brother had gone there too.

“‘That I do not know,’ he answered, more soberly. ‘Once a very dear friend of mine was caught and taken off in the same way. Master said he did not need us both, and I was younger. I never heard of him again. And I notice also

that when my wives stop laying they are very likely to disappear.'

"'Do you mean you have more than one wife? Why, we pigeons never have but one mate, and we love her very much, and always fight for her.'

"'How very crude you are!' he exclaimed, in a disgusted tone. 'I have never fought a battle in my life, and never expect to. Master attends to all my wants. I have only to keep my wonderful voice in good condition, which I do by practicing early every morning; and I also spend a certain amount of time each day in keeping my feathers beautiful, for my wives all admire me very much. And as for them, they are very proud to have me for a husband, and all are happy and contented. Really, you pigeons must be most primitive in your ways.'

"'But why don't you fly?' I asked, curiously.

"'Fly?' he echoed. 'That, too, passed out of fashion with us long, long ago. We never think of flying. That is only for you vulgar, wild birds to do.' And thus closing the conversation, he strutted off to his family.

"All he had said was very new and strange to me, but, as it was now fast growing dark, I flew up to the top of the barn and went to sleep.

I was very tired, and no one disturbed me. I awoke before the sun was up, and thought at once of what the rooster had said about my being shot if I remained there. But I was still tired from my long flight, and was very anxious to stay if I could with safety; so I walked along to the end of the ridgepole and looked over the side. I saw a place under the eaves that interested me, so down I flew.

"Yes, it would indeed make a nice place for a nest, well protected from wind and rain; and lying all about the barn-yard were many straws and twigs which would be just the things to build with. But being hungry I flew down into the hen-yard, and in the course of half an hour managed to find enough seeds lying about to satisfy my appetite. After that I went around back of the barn in search of bugs and other delicacies, which I found in great numbers.

"I then took a nice piece of straw in my mouth, and flew up to the place I had chosen for my home. I laid it down and stood planning how I could make my nest, when I remembered that even if I built it, I had no mate, and this made me sad. I sat down right where I was and called many times, 'Mm-m-m!' but though I waited patiently no mate came. I

had not really expected one to hear me, but I felt I must practice wooing so I could do it well when I found her.

“But there was no use of building a nest if I had no mate, so I gave up the idea and again flew to the roof of the barn. The Master was out in the hen-yard, and all the birds seemed to be very much excited. The rooster, whose acquaintance I had made, was running about wildly, and the man seemed to be trying to catch him; but why he should be so afraid of such a kind master I could not understand. The poor fellow was so fat he could not fly, so clumsy he could not run fast, and so stupid he could not even think of a place in which to hide. He waddled into a corner of the pen, turned around, and as his master drew near I thought for a moment he was going to fight after all; but instead he tried only to run off to another corner. But now the man reached quickly and grabbed him by the leg. The poor rooster, very much frightened, squawked and flapped his wings, trying hard to get away, but the man held him fast; and with head down and wings spread, he was carried outside the pen.

“Then the man felt his flesh, held him at

arm's length as though to see how heavy he was, and smiled in a satisfied manner.

“‘Well,’ he said, ‘I guess no wheat went to waste while you were around, for you are nice and fat; and now I mean to get the money back your food has cost me.’

“The poor rooster looked up at him very pathetically, and begged to be allowed to go back to his family. He called his master's attention to his wonderful voice and beautiful feathers, but it was far from being the boastful tone he had used to me. There was nothing in his voice now but sheer fright.

“Perhaps the man did not understand him; but if he did he gave no heed, but acted like my rough and cruel pigeon-master. We birds, too, have feelings and affections, though most humans fail to realize this. So that master, not understanding, was deaf to all appeals. The rooster spoke, but the man heard and saw nothing. He went rapidly around the corner of the barn and I saw no more, for I dared not follow him.

“But the rooster must have gotten free, for I heard him flap his wings a few times—then all was quiet. He was doubtless hiding somewhere till the man went away. How quickly a pigeon would have flown up into the air and escaped, I

thought. But I remembered the rooster had said, 'Only vulgar, wild birds fly,' and I was thankful I belonged to that class, for had not flying saved me from the humans? And wouldn't it also have saved him? I wondered if he was thinking of that too.

"Then the man came back bringing two awkward, long-legged, young roosters which he put into the pen with the still excited wives; and soon life in the hen-yard was just as happy and just as monotonous as ever, and the old rooster was forgotten. I do not know where he went, for I never saw him again.

"As soon as I found courage I flew down to the ground to hunt for something to eat. I had been there only a few minutes when another pigeon, a very large, handsome fellow, flew down beside me. Immediately we cooed a greeting to each other; then he, too, began hunting for food. He seemed to be a very clever bird who had seen more of life than I had, but I thought he acted strangely.

"He saw at once I was a young pigeon, and took it upon himself to instruct me. He asked me how long I had been out of the nest, and if I had ever seen a gun.

"The man here has one,' I said, 'though I

have never seen it. But a rooster told me all tramp birds are shot.'

"Well, you must keep a sharp lookout. I, too, left the bird city to escape the fate of all babies who remain there, and to search for a home where I could be safe. But after all you only fly from one danger into another. I found a human-house with fields of grain near it, so I flew down to get some seeds to eat. I had been there only a few minutes when a man came out of the house. I was not a bit afraid of him, for he was a long way off, and if he came nearer I could quickly fly away; but he stood still, and I calmly went on eating. Suddenly I heard a *bang!* and then I felt a terrible pain in my leg and another in my back.

"I know now the man hit me with two little lead stones from his shotgun. Blood came out of the holes the stones made, and my feathers were soon covered with the warm, sticky, red paste. I felt very weak, and when I tried to fly more blood came. I also found my leg was broken. But I could not stay there; so I crawled away, very slowly and with much pain, until at last I reached a bush under which I could lie in safety.

"For days I was forced to go without food or

drink, as I did not dare venture out where I might be seen. My wounds hurt terribly, but after a while the pain began to leave and I could move a little. Soon I was able to fly a short distance, and by resting often, I have come this far. But my leg that was hurt is shorter than the other, and I shall always be a cripple. Now I am on my way back to the bird city, for I had rather risk being taken away in a bag than being shot. And after all, it may be a very nice place where they take the babies. But I am too old now for them to bother with anyway. So I am going back home as fast as ever I can, and you had better come with me.'

"But I would not think of it. I had left the bird city to search for a home, and I was too brave to give up before I found it. Besides, I liked to discover things for myself, and I was learning something new every day. Father had said I would be far safer in the gardens than in our city, and he ought to know.

"Just then the master appeared in his doorway. He had a gun under his arm. Whether he had seen us or not I do not know, but my companion spread his wings and flew swiftly away towards the bird city; and, seized with sudden fright, I followed. I was soon away from

the house, but my new acquaintance was too far ahead for me to attempt to follow him farther. So, turning my back once more to the sun, I continued my journey towards the gardens.

“After a long time I reached a small town where there were many human-houses. One of these stood in the center of a big piece of ground, and was the largest building of all. A small tower in the center of its roof especially attracted me. I flew near to this tower, and as one of the blinds had a broken shutter, I could see a small room inside and many nice places for nests. Cautiously I went in to look around. I at once saw traces of pigeons, and soon discovered a female in her nest sitting on two eggs. I asked her about the place and found she had lived there with her mate for several weeks. She told me she had a pair of young males just out of the nest, and that all babies were quite safe from the humans; for the tower was so high from the ground nothing but birds could reach it. No one ever used a gun in that village, and one could live there in peace.

“All she said pleased me greatly, and I felt at last I had found a home. I looked around the room and saw above one of the blinds a shelf that was just the place for a nest. I flew upon it

at once, and cooed to her I was taking possession of it. Then I sat down and again called 'Mm-m-m!' but as before no one came. However it was good practice.

"After a while the mate came flying home. He was much surprised to see me, and flew quickly over to the nest which was in a corner of the room on the floor, to see that all was well. Then, after greeting me, he cooed in a different tone, at the same time turning around, first facing me and then the nest. This was to tell me I must not molest it.

"Then he flew up to several of the rafters, cooing on each to show me which were his. I hopped quickly to a half dozen others, and in the same way claimed each of them for my own. Once I alighted on a long beam which ran across to his side. He objected to that, and came cooing over to me. I cooed back, threateningly. We slowly approached each other, and he gave me a heavy blow. I spread both my wings and brought my right down as hard as I could upon him. I don't think I hurt him much, for he hit me again harder than before. I now realized he was stronger than I, and perhaps the roost did belong to him. Had I been sure it did not, I would have fought to a finish. At any rate

I did not need it, so I flew again to one of my rafters, and cooed fiercely. He then walked the whole length of his beam, warning me to keep off.

“But I had had enough; so, going back to the place I first selected, I longed for the time when I too could have a nest, a mate, and perhaps two little eggs, all my own. And thinking of this I went to sleep. The next morning I started out in search of food. After I had finished breakfast, I flew about the town, and when I returned to my home, I found many human-children playing on the ground below. I sat there in the broken blind watching them, when something in the tower began making a terrible noise. I was frightened, and darting outside flew about in great circles. Soon the other male joined me, and told me not to be alarmed, for it was only a bell ringing for the children to go into school.

“After they had gone inside, we went down to the ground to search for crumbs scattered about. When we had eaten all we could find, we flew to the children’s drinking place, and perching on the edge took a good drink. During the afternoon I gathered a half dozen straws, and carried them one by one into the tower. But I

did not try to do more, because I knew, when I found my mate, she would want to arrange the straws herself.

"I lived in that tower all winter. I always found plenty to eat in near-by chicken-pens and barn-yards, and there were usually crumbs which the children dropped. But when spring came, the bell rang no more and the school was closed. I was still without a mate, and each afternoon I made a long flight into the country looking for her.

"One evening when I returned I found my friends very much excited and flying about the tower in circles. As I came nearer I saw what had happened. The broken shutter had been mended, and there was now no way of getting into our home. The female had been sitting in her nest, when a human came right up through a little door in the floor which we did not know was there, grabbed her by the wings, and threw her out of the tower. She turned quickly in mid-air to try to defend her nest, and was just in time to see it thrown to the ground where it now lay, with the partly hatched eggs all broken in pieces. The man had then proceeded to mend the shutter, so we could not enter the place again.

"I began to feel very bitter towards the

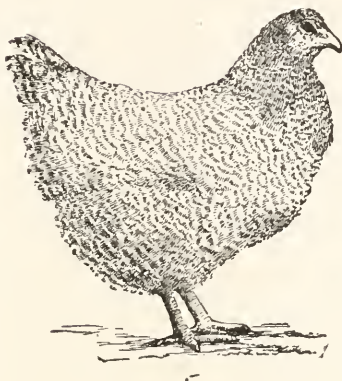
humans, because they were always so cruel. I had grown to like my friends very much, and sympathized with them deeply. Now I was again without a home. We all slept on the ridgepole that night, and very early the next morning I left my friends to fly away once more towards the gardens Father had told me of. So you see, Laddie, I have had my share of trouble."

"Yes, indeed. I did not know there were such cruel people in the world. I understand now why you like the name of our farm. But how did you find your way here?"

"O, Laddie! Laddie! I offered to tell you only one story, and here you are begging for two. But I must go now, for it is nearly our supper-time. Some day I will tell you how I came here, and found my home and mate at last. But now I'm off. Good-bye!"

I would rather be the children's story-teller than
the queen's favorite or the king's counsellor.

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN.



Ah! what would the world be to us
If the children were no more?
We should dread the desert behind us
Worse than the dark before.

LONGFELLOW.

THE OLD LADY

LADDIE had come out to his favorite place at the foot of The Giant, while he pondered over what he should do next. There were so many things he could do; but then—there was no hurry about deciding. Meanwhile it was fun enough just to roll in the deep, cool grass, not fearing to soil or stain his “living clothes” as he called them.

But at last, tired of so much exercise—for the day was hot—he lay quietly on his back, with Dickum close beside him, and gazed up into the big tree. Some day, he decided, he would climb right up into The Giant and see if he could find the gray squirrels’ hole. And he would like to look into that tiny nest on the bough overhead and see if there were any babies in it. If only he had a ladder so he could reach the lowest limb, it would be very simple. He was hardly big enough to shin up. But to-day was too warm for so much effort anyway, and the grass here was very nice and soft.

Dickum turned his head skyward from time to time, where a tiny black speck could be seen floating like a feather in the air; and sometimes as it dropped nearer the earth, he emitted a low growl.

"Don't be silly, Dickum! That's nothing but a bird," Laddie explained, sleepily.

But though Dickum wagged his tail showing he had heard, he continued to gaze skyward. Soon Laddie's eyes closed, and Dickum silently stretched himself full length beside the boy. It seemed to Laddie only a moment later, when he was rudely awakened by Dickum's dashing madly away, barking loudly. What could have happened to make Dickum desert him? And now he could hear the fowls cackling and making frightened noises, and he could see the pigeons flying wildly about. Perhaps some of his friends were in trouble; and at the thought, Laddie, too, took to his heels. He followed the sound of Dickum's voice, and reached a small chicken-coop just in time to see a big bird fly swiftly up into the air. It was evident Dickum had scared it away.

"That was very naughty of you, Dickum," Laddie scolded. "That was a new bird; and if you hadn't frightened it off, perhaps it would have built its nest here, and then we would

have had another friend. Naughty, naughty Dickum!"

Dickum's ears lay back flat against his head as though he were being threatened with a whipping, and the tears stood in his beautiful brown eyes at Laddie's words of displeasure; but before he could tell what really had happened, the old hen in the chicken-coop spoke up in his defense.

"O, Laddie, I beg you not to scold Dickum; for he has just done a brave and noble deed."

"Why, what did he do?" asked the astonished boy.

"Do? Why, he saved one or more of my children from an awful death."

"From death? I don't understand. That was only a bird, you know. You must be very nervous."

"You would be nervous, too, if you had received such a shock as I," cackled the hen. "The bird that Dickum frightened away was a hawk. He has been watching us from 'way up in the air for a long time, for hawks love chickens to eat. I tried to keep my babies in the coop with me; but I had just turned my back for a minute, when three of them ran out. The hawk had been waiting for this very thing, and swooped down before I could warn them; but friend

Dickum saw him, and arrived just in time to save their lives. Children are so hard to bring up, especially when they are disobedient," and she shook her head sadly.

Laddie's arms were already around Dickum's neck, as he whispered how sorry he was to have suspected him of doing anything wrong. Dickum was wild with delight, and leaping up kissed Laddie right on the end of his nose. It was a very wet kiss, but then Laddie was well used to Dickum's kisses. He was about to walk away when the hen spoke again.

"I see, Laddie, you have no proper appreciation of what it means to have all of my children spared to me. I mean, these *special* children."

"Why," Laddie answered, courteously, "naturally you love your children and want nothing to happen to them. But why are these *special* children? Perhaps you would be so good as to tell me about them," and Laddie sat down by the coop, expectantly, with Dickum hovering near.

The hen clucked her joy, for she knew Laddie loved stories, and she meant to make the most of this opportunity; for few had ever cared to listen to her family reminiscences.

"I will, with great pleasure. But in order to make you clearly understand, I think I had

better begin at the beginning," she said, craftily. "Of course I am not a traveled person as some of your friends are, and what little education I have I picked up by talking with the simple folk about me; for I was born on this very farm, and have never left it even for an hour. So you see I cannot tell you stories of any wild adventures. But though you may think my life a simple one, I love it just the same; and let me tell you, hens have their joys and sorrows too—though I do not think we make so much fuss over them as you humans do.

"I am an old hen, ugly, fat, and clumsy; and my bones have grown so heavy I can no longer fly up to the roost as the White Leghorns do, but have to sleep in one of the nests below. You see, I am a Plymouth Rock—the only one on the place—and I suppose it has been very hard for the White Leghorns to understand me, for we are very different in all our ways. My mother was also a Plymouth Rock, and just four years ago thirteen eggs were placed under her in a nice nest in the barn. This had been done many times before, and to her great disgust she had found her children always turned out to be White Leghorns; for she had heard the farmer say, 'White Leghorns always lay better, but it is

well to keep at least one Plymouth Rock for sitting purposes.' And so she had been kept, and had raised many broods of White Leghorn chickens.

"This time a Plymouth Rock egg was put in the nest by mistake, but the other twelve were White Leghorns as usual; and after she had sat there for twenty-one days they began to pip the shells, and one by one they came out, Mother helping where she needed to. I was the last to come out, because in that as in everything else I was clumsy and slow; and then Mother had to pip my shell for me and help me a lot more than she had the others. But her joy was immeasurable when she saw a Plymouth Rock baby emerge.

"The next morning the man who had placed the eggs under Mother put us all in a little coop with slats on the side just like this one, so we could run in and out as much as we pleased; and there we remained for several weeks. My brothers and sisters were very lively, often roaming far away from the coop; and they never paid much attention to Mother's call unless she had something nice for them to eat. But they were bright and soon learned to take care of themselves; and though their disobedience worried Mother much, they never got into any of the troubles she feared.

"I was never able to run as fast as they, and even if I tried to jump off of a box, I was so clumsy I was sure to land on my head. As the others always laughed at me, I liked best to stay in the coop with Mother; and because I loved her very much, I always tried to be obedient.

"It was partly for this reason and partly because I had gray feathers just like hers, that I became her pet child; and while the others were away scratching for worms and often getting into mischief, I would climb up on Mother's back, and lie there for hours at a time, with my feet buried in her nice warm feathers, while she told me stories. I listened to those stories as I have never listened to anything since; for she was a hen of four summers and had raised many children, and so could tell me just how to be a good mother when I, too, should have a family.

"One morning when I was about four weeks old the man came to the coop, and lifting Mother by the legs, felt her flesh.

"'Well,' he said to another man who was with him, 'she is certainly good and fat; and as the chickens don't need her any longer, you had better take her away to-day. She is getting pretty old to keep.'

"They tied Mother's legs and weighed her, and

the scales said eight pounds, which appeared to please the men very much. Mother did not seem frightened, for she had always taught me that anything you humans did must be right. She had only time to tell me never to forget her advice, and to try to be useful and patient when I grew up, just as she had been. Then they took her away, and I never saw her again.

"The other chickens were not there at the time, and knew nothing about it till they came home to be warmed at night. I was already huddled up in a corner of the coop, and they gathered around me so we could keep each other warm. During the night someone with a light came and put us all in a basket, and in the morning when we awoke we found we had been given a nice big yard with a wire fence around it, to run in. The others began to hunt for a way out; but I, missing Mother terribly, ran up and down the pen calling her. She never answered. It was a long, dreary day for the whole thirteen of us.

"That night we orphans cuddled together again in a corner, but soon the man came with a light as before, and put us all upon a roost. It was so dark I stayed there; but as I was afraid of falling, I got little sleep. You see, Mother had never told me about sleeping on a roost, as I

suppose she thought I was still too young for that.

“When we had been in this pen a few days, the man came one night just before dark, and opened a little gate in our wire fence. We all ran out eagerly; for next to bugs and worms we like to bite off the tops of green grass, and we are especially fond of clover which is so sweet and juicy. The White Leghorns ran rapidly down the path looking for delicacies of any kind, and having nothing better to do I followed them.

“Before long one of them discovered a nice, soft flower-bed beside the walk, and called the rest of us over to it. Soon we were scratching as hard as we could make our little legs go. After a while I came upon a big, fat worm. It was too big for me to eat quickly, so I grasped it in my bill and started to run with it. Just then the Leghorns spied me. I could not go very fast, so one of my brothers soon overtook me, and pulling off a big piece ran away with it. Some of the family now started to chase him; but as I still had a large portion left, the rest kept after me.

“Now another rooster came up, and grabbing one end of my piece began trying to get it away from me. I peeped to him that I had found the worm and it was mine; but he only laughed.

'Not much, Old Lady,' he said, calling me by the name they had long ago decided most appropriate; 'it's not what you find, but what you actually get down your throat, that is yours.'

"Then he gave another pull at the worm, and this time succeeded in getting quite a piece. The rest now crowded around me, each taking a bite, and soon I had only a tiny portion of the big worm left. As they now appeared satisfied, I supposed of course they would be willing to let me eat that in peace; so I laid it at my feet, as I wanted to rest a moment before enjoying my hard-earned morsel. Suddenly a chicken rushed up and grabbed it so quickly, I did not know what had happened for an instant. And so I lost it all.

"I am telling you this to show you how slow I was compared to the White Leghorns. I did not have time to find another worm, for a man came running after us with a broom and drove us all away. He had a lot of dirt to sweep up that we had scattered all over the clean walk, and I went back to try to make him understand I was sorry; for it is not my nature to be mischievous like the Leghorns. But he shook the broom at me again, and I thought it best to leave.

"My brothers and sisters had already gone

off and left me, and I did not know where to look for them. I thought it all over in my slow way, and decided as our natures were so very different I would be better off by myself; and ever since then I have lived as much alone as I could. Of course I had to stay in the pen with the others, but I attended strictly to my own affairs.

“One day a few weeks later, the man came into our pen with a large sack, and a stick with a long hooked wire on the end of it. We were frightened, because he had never come before except to feed and clean us. We ran up and down the pen, trying to find a hole in the wire through which we could escape. Suddenly the man started for one of the roosters, and after chasing him a minute succeeded in catching his leg in the hooked end of the wire.

“The poor fellow was thrown to the ground, and the man walked up to him as he lay there helpless, and picked him up by the legs. Then the rooster lost all of his senses—just as roosters always do—and gave a series of horrible long squawks which frightened us more than ever. There were five roosters in the pen; and soon all had been caught, put in the bag, and carried away—still squawking. To the rest of us the man paid no attention.

“And so we developed gradually into henhood. The weather became warmer, and I grew fatter and clumsier. I had learned weeks ago to keep it to myself when I found a worm or a choice bit to eat, and I spent much of my time alone. Before long we were put in a still larger pen with some older hens. There were two roosters also in the flock, but they had eyes only for the frivolous little White Leghorns. I could not blame them, for White Leghorns are pretty and quick in their movements, while just the opposite is true of me—though I do hope I have more sense.

“One morning I laid an egg, and as I thought that a very wonderful thing to do, I cackled my joy for the rest of the day. The next morning I laid another, and I was just as proud of that; but I kept more quiet about it because the Leghorns made so much fun of me. But try as I would the following days, I could lay no more. This worried me, for the Leghorns were laying regularly, and I began to be afraid the man would take me away as he had the roosters.

“In fact I worried so much about it, I soon became very cross. Both of the roosters laughed at my ways, and said I was as fussy as any old lady could possibly be—which amused my silly sisters very much.

"I grew to dislike the society of the others more and more, and decided their continual egg-laying must be very monotonous. I was too clumsy to scratch much, for I had grown very fat; and altogether I was pretty miserable. I thought of Mother and how happy she had been with her children, and then I began to wish I could have some babies to bring up too. But I had no eggs to sit on; and knowing I might never have any babies, I did the next best thing, and *imagined* I had some. I went about, clucking to these make-believe children to follow me; and when I found a grain of wheat I would call in a different tone, 'Come quickly and eat it.' Once one of the hens came running up and tried to steal a piece of meat from me; but I imagined her taking it from my babies and flew at her, biting her so hard on the comb it bled. After that I was left to myself.

"But I did want some real babies. I resolved to do as Mother had always done, and see what would come of it. So I started at once for the hen-house, determined to sit—eggs or no eggs. But I was saved from doing such a foolish thing, for in one of the nests were three eggs, hardly cold yet. I decided to appropriate them, so I climbed in and sat down. I was happy over my

good luck. I would have only three babies, but surely three were better than none. I stayed there all the afternoon. Once a White Leghorn came in to lay, and laughed at me for doing such an out-of-date thing as to sit on eggs.

“She said much more, to all of which I listened patiently; for I remembered she was only a White Leghorn, and they do not make good mothers. But I pretended to be much interested and moved over a trifle; for I was very anxious she should occupy part of my nest, which she soon settled down into. I may not be quick to get food, but I am quick about anything which concerns babies; and here I saw a chance to get another egg, and that would increase my family to four. When she joined the others, she told them I was absolutely crazy; and so they all came in to look at me, and went out again laughing. But what did I care, for I was now sitting on *four* eggs.

“But by and by the man came to collect the eggs, and as I was determined he should not have mine, I fought and bit him as hard as I could. When I made his hand bleed, he began to get angry.

““So,” he said, ‘you are trying to make me think you want to sit, but I don’t for a minute believe you mean business. Well, I guess we can

soon stop that,' and he grabbed me suddenly by the legs and threw me out into the yard. Of course I landed on my feet, because I was grown now and had learned long ago to turn in the air when falling; but even so, I nearly rolled over when I struck the ground, because I had grown so fat. A White Leghorn is much lighter, and would have landed very gracefully.

"Again the others began laughing and made rude remarks, but I was too much upset to mind them. I stormed around the yard clucking, for it seemed as though the man had taken away not eggs, but real babies from me. Up and down the pen I went as though trying to find them, all the time calling loudly for them to come to me. Sometimes I would spread my wings wide, as though to protect my babies who seemed to be just behind me. Then I would imagine I was charging through a large flock of hens, and cutting a wide path for my children.

"It was all very real to me, and I was too excited to care what the others said. But soon I became tired and could run no more. I started to search for wheat kernels, and when I found one I would cluck to my imaginary family to come and eat it; but of course when they did not appear, I always ate it myself.

“When I thought the man had gone away, I went cautiously back to my nest and sat down in it. All the eggs had been taken, but I was determined to sit even without any; so I would imagine I had some. In one nest, however, a long, white egg had been left. I laughed when I saw it, for it was made by the humans and placed there to make us think ours should be equally large. But though I laughed, I moved over, and the egg was really a great comfort; for after a short time it became warm and felt like a real one—and I pretended it meant one baby.

“Soon it grew dark. The others came flocking in, laughed at me again, flew up to the roosts, and went to sleep. I sat on my large white egg all night, undisturbed. But I still remembered that when a hen stopped laying she was apt to disappear, and I worried about it constantly. In short, I was on the verge of nervous prostration.

“The next morning I thought my fears were to be realized. You see, when the man came to feed us I did not get up as usual for breakfast, and when he saw me on the nest he tried to poke me off with his fingers. I was very cross, as all hens are when they want to sit, and tried to bite him again; but I did not succeed in hurting

him any. Then suddenly he went away and I *was* scared; for I knew he would never give up so easily. Once the Leghorns came in to see me, and remarked comfortingly I would be the next one to go; and that did not calm me any.

"In a very short time the man returned. I searched his face carefully, and decided it did not look so hard and cruel as when he took Mother away. But he had gloves on his hands, and I knew something was going to happen.

"‘Well, Old Lady,’ he said, ‘I guess I’ll put you where you will be more comfortable,’ and he grabbed me by the feet and started to walk towards the barn. At first I tried to bite him, but his gloves were too thick; and as I was being carried head down, I soon became too tired to even try. The White Leghorns looked at me knowingly as I was taken past them, but I could not imagine what was to happen to me.

"When we reached the barn he carried me directly to an unused box-stall, and put me down on the edge of the manger which he had filled with hay. I was indeed happy when I saw a nice place filled with real eggs. He watched me as I walked over to the nest. I could not even stop to thank him, I was so excited. I jumped right down into the hay, stepped carefully

between the eggs, and at once sat down on them, clucking happily all the time.

“‘Now,’ said the man, ‘we will see if you are any good at all. You can’t lay, but let’s hope you can sit.’

“He scattered some wheat on the floor near me, and placing a dish of fresh water beside it, went away. I was perfectly contented. I proceeded to re-arrange the nest to make it fit me better, and placed the eggs so I could count them all easily, for I was anxious to see if I had been given as many as Mother always had.

“Now it is a very hard thing for us hens to count up to twelve, because we have little use for arithmetic,—and I don’t believe the White Leghorns could do it at all,—but that was one of the many things Mother had taught me. Some of the humans think I cannot really count; but I can, and this is the way I do it. You humans always reckon by tens, and do you know why? It is because you have ten fingers on both hands. Now we have only three toes on each foot, and we must reckon by sixes. So I proceeded to put each toe on an egg, and that made six. Then I tried to do it again, but I was one egg short. Now Mother had told me that a hen should have thirteen eggs to sit on;

and to count them you use all your toes twice, and then you have one egg left over. But I still lacked an egg for one toe, so I knew I did not have thirteen, or twelve even; but one less than twelve was too big a problem, though I studied on it a long time. Indeed to this day I do not know how many I had; but it ceased to worry me long ago, for I think it too difficult for any hen to solve. After all, I was only too glad to have so many eggs and a nice nest.

“As soon as I got settled down, I began the work that was to keep me there for weeks; and all of that day I never moved except to turn in the nest in order to rest myself. That night I slept very lightly, and the next morning I examined my eggs and turned them over to make sure they were all right. That afternoon the man brought me some fresh water, and as I was thirsty, I flew down on the barn floor and took a good drink.

“Now we hens like to take a long time in drinking, and we thoroughly enjoy the process. First we put our bills in the water, and making cups of our tongues, fill them. Then raising our heads the water runs slowly down our throats. We like to feel the trickling of the cool fluid, and we often close our eyes the better to enjoy it.

We can take only a few drops at a time, and when the last drop has been swallowed, we awake as from a trance, and then take another tongue full. It is often fully ten minutes before we finish drinking. I did not spend as much time as usual, however, for I was afraid my eggs would get cold. I did try to eat a little wheat, but I was not hungry, as I had had no exercise. So I soon returned to the nest, this time facing the other way.

“And so the days went by swiftly, for I occupied much of my time thinking of my babies, and how I would soon be leading them about the yards—and perhaps the gardens. With what joy I would exhibit them to the White Leghorns, and say, with pride, ‘These are my children.’

“Each day I turned the eggs over, and at last the time came when I began to listen for signs of life within. One day I heard one of my babies moving, and I knew that it was getting ready for its new life. In a few hours others were stirring, and the next morning I heard one of the shells crack a little. I put my head down that I might see, and sure enough one was trying to break through. I watched him with absorbing interest as he bit off a small piece of the shell, then cracked it a little further. In the course

of half an hour he had, with much difficulty, made quite a hole. I did not help him, because I knew he could do it himself, and it was better for him to have the exercise.

“Then another shell was pipped, and then another, until all but one had been cracked. Then the first one, bursting his open rather suddenly, tumbled out into the nest where he lay exhausted by his efforts. A little piece of the shell still stuck to his back. I pulled it off with my bill and put it with the other pieces on the edge of the nest, so he would not get cut with them. Little by little the others came out, until all but one were hatched; and as I could hear no sound inside, I knew I should get no baby from that egg.

“Soon the man came in, and suspecting something, lifted me up that he might see how we were getting on. I was not cross any more, and did not attempt to bite him; but I ruffled up my feathers and tried to tell him how wonderful my babies were, and that he must be very careful of them—all of which I think he understood.

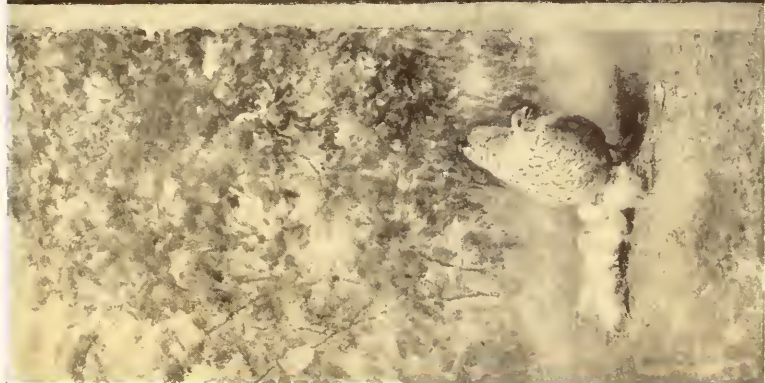
“He put us down on the floor, where he had placed a dish of bran, and watched me as I ate and tried to show my babies how. They soon learned to peck at it, but were too young to

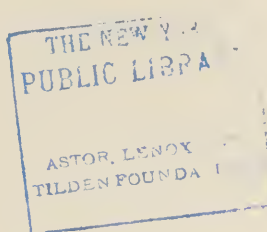
swallow any yet. Then I led them very slowly over to a snug corner and called them to come under my feathers, for it was too cold for them to run about any longer.

“The next day I proudly took them out for a walk by my old pen, but the Leghorns did not seem to be as deeply impressed as I expected; and, instead of being glad I had not disappeared for good, began laughing at me the same as ever. So I took my babies off to the barn-yard, and began teaching them to scratch. But if the Leghorns laughed, it was from ignorance and folly; for I heard the humans say, I had a fine family and made a good mother. And I consider that praise enough for any hen.

“When my babies were grown, more eggs were given me and I raised another brood. But as soon as cold weather came, the Leghorns ceased to lay; and one by one they were caught, weighed, and taken away—never to come back. Only a few of us remained all winter in our comfortable house.

“The next summer I raised four families, and am still as busy as ever. But this is my fourth summer, and I do not know how much longer I shall be here. And, Laddie, though I am not graceful or beautiful, I feel I have ac-





complished a hen's noblest mission—being a good mother to many children. I have never laid many eggs; and the Leghorns still laugh at me, though I put that down to jealousy long ago. But if they are jealous of me, I, in turn, am sorry for them—for they will never know what it means to be a mother," and she closed her eyes contemplatively.

Laddie, fearing she might go to sleep, spoke to her gently:

"What you have told me is most interesting, and I admire you very much indeed. But I am afraid you quite forgot to tell me what you started to. I mean about your 'special' children."

"O, Laddie! Laddie! That proves I am getting very old, for when I begin talking about my younger days I forget everything else. You have *listened carefully*, but have not *watched closely*, or you would have seen for yourself. Now, Laddie, use your eyes, and tell me why I call these babies 'special' ones."

"Because they are so fat?"

"No."

"Because they are so cunning?"

"No, for all of my children have been cunning. Try again."

"Perhaps because they resemble you," Laddie suggested, politely.

"That's it! That's it!" clucked the mother, joyously. "You have guessed it at last."

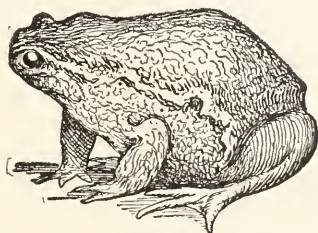
"But I do not quite see yet—" Laddie began.

"O, you stupid boy! You certainly ought to belong to our family if you cannot understand that. Why, all of my other children were White Leghorns. But these, the last family I may ever raise, are 'special,' because they are my own Plymouth Rocks. And I have to thank Mother Dear for that. She came out here one day, and I think she understood; for she called the man, and told him to be sure to give me Plymouth Rock eggs the next time I sat—and this is the result. O, Boy! Mothers *always* understand.— But there is one of my children getting into trouble," and off she hurried, calling and clucking loudly.

Laddie watched her thoughtfully a moment. "*Mothers always understand.*" Yes, you are right there, Old Lady.— And now, Dickum, for a race. One! Two! Three! *Go!*"

O, the green things growing, the green things growing,
The faint sweet smell of the green things growing!
I should like to live, whether I smile or grieve,
Just to watch the happy life of my green things growing.

DINAH MULOCK CRAIK.



The universe of God is still not dumb,
For many voices in sweet undertone
To reverent listeners come.

PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE.

FARM LABORERS

DADDIE had not forgotten the Old Doctor's injunction to let the boy dig in the dirt, and so almost at once a garden had been started. A small plot of ground not far from the house had been selected, and Laddie was soon busy with seeds and young plants. He had everything to learn, for he had never owned a plant of any kind in his life before. He planned it all himself—or thought he did—and the others merely suggested.

At first Laddie wanted to plant only corn. The farmer had planted a big field of it, and had told him it would soon grow to be far higher than his head; and Laddie thought it would make a fine place in which to play hide-and-seek with Dickum.

But after talking it over with the family he decided it would be better to plant a few of many kinds of vegetables, instead of just the one. For Daddie and Mother Dear wanted him not only to have the exercise of digging in the dirt, but also

to be brought close to Mother Nature herself, and to study her many mysterious and wonderful ways of working. When she touched a seed, he was to learn what a marvelous thing it really was.

Laddie knew most of the vegetables when he met them at the dinner-table, but he had little idea of their identity when he saw them in the garden. Who would think that potatoes, beans, and cucumbers could grow so differently? Everything always did just the opposite from what he expected, he thought with wonder. It was fairyland to the little city chap for a while, and early each morning the garden was visited to see what strange thing had happened during the night.

The farmer had prepared the earth for him, and helped him get the garden well started. And then Laddie had been taught to dig, and hoe, and weed, and be on the constant watch for bugs which would destroy the young plants. He would often water the garden too; for everything must grow well in this place. And Mother Dear had promised that all the vegetables he raised should be cooked especially for him as a reward for his industry.

He did not neglect his friends, nor his other duties; but his real work lay here. And for a young boy, he did keep his garden in fine con-

dition. He knew each plant by name now, and loved them all.

But to-night, as he entered his garden after supper, it was not of the plants he was thinking, but of a new inhabitant who had come there to live only a few days before. The first time he saw her he thought her extremely ugly, and wished she had not come. But the farmer said he would find her very useful in keeping the garden free from bugs, so he did not attempt to drive her away.

He had soon begun to look for her each time he entered the garden; for her very ugliness, which had at first repulsed him, was now beginning to attract him. She was so different from anything else he had seen on the farm. And all the time his curiosity had been growing, until now he had come out determined to get acquainted, if possible.

His eyes were eagerly searching the ground, and at last he spied her. She sat there, resting her short, front legs on a small lump of earth, which hid the lower part of her body from Laddie. She was indeed a grotesque-looking creature.

Laddie began to scatter some crumbs on the ground. "Here, Toadie," speaking in his pretty, friendly manner, "is something for your supper,

so you won't have to work for it to-night; for I have noticed it is very hard for you to get about. At least, you always move very slowly."

The toad looked at him with her yellow-bordered, keen, black eyes. Then slowly she winked one of them, and Laddie noticed she did so by pulling the whole eye down into her head, instead of drawing the lid up over it like the hen.

"Don't you like bread-crumbs?" persisted the lad, seeing she made no move to eat them. But the toad answered never a word.

"If you would rather have meat, I will go into the house and get some for you," Laddie continued, coaxingly.

"No, thank you," suddenly replied the toad, in a disgusted voice. "I would not think of eating either your meat or bread. I eat bugs."

"Is that why the farmer said you would be a good friend to keep in my garden?"

"Yes, I am here to help you take care of the plants; and I eat more than one hundred bugs every day. Hadn't you noticed that something was spoiling your garden stuff? Well, you would have but little of it left, except for me. I eat up the bugs, and so save your garden from destruction—but it keeps me pretty busy."

"But you are taking a nice rest now, aren't you?"

"No, I have been resting more or less all day, for it was much too hot to work; but now I am busy getting my supper. If you will sit down quietly, and remember the rules, perhaps you can see how I do it."

"O, I will be glad to! I promise to *listen carefully*, and *watch closely*, for I want to learn a lot about you."

"Sh! Don't talk. Here comes a bug now."

The toad turned herself silently around, and her eyes seemed to become even brighter than before. Laddie now saw a small bug crawling slowly towards her. Suddenly, when it was about three inches from her, she sprang forward. He saw her mouth open, and, perhaps, a little pink streak; but, anyway, the bug was gone, and the toad settled slowly back into her hole behind the lump of earth.

And now Laddie noticed on the beet leaf beneath which the toad was squatting, another bug. It crawled along the edge of the leaf, downward. The toad was watching it, too, for she turned around to face it. When it reached the end of the leaf, the bug let go and fell to the ground within an inch of the toad's head.

She did not spring forward this time; but the big mouth opened, there was a flash of pink—Laddie was sure of it now—and the bug was gone.

Next a small beetle came along, busily dragging a dainty morsel home to its expectant family. It crawled towards the toad, little suspecting the danger that lurked for it in this living cavern. The toad turned as before to face it, waiting quietly. As soon as it was near enough, she sprang forward with a quick jump; the mouth opened—a flash of pink—the beetle was gone. But now the toad seemed to be having trouble. She swallowed over and over again, pulling her eyes down into her head each time. For a moment the creature seemed quite distressed; but soon the difficulty was over, and she was now ready to talk. She turned towards Laddie, encouragingly.

“Oh! may I speak now?” inquired the boy. “I have tried very hard to be quiet. You do it beautifully, but how do you manage to catch them so quickly?”

“I have had much experience,” replied the toad. “If you had to catch as many bugs for your living as I do, you would learn to do it quickly, too—that is, if you had a decent kind of a tongue. You see, my tongue is attached only

at the front of my mouth, so, when I see a bug, I can throw it out instantly. It is covered with sticky saliva—so sticky that if it ever touches a bug he is sure to be held fast; and then all I have to do is to draw my tongue back into my mouth, and that is the end of him.”

Laddie stuck his own tongue out as far as he could, curiously. “I see what you mean. My tongue wouldn’t be much good at catching bugs, would it? But why do you pull your eyes down into your head when you swallow? It almost hurt me to see you trying to get that beetle down.”

“O, my eyes, as well as my tongue, are very different from yours! You use your eyes only to see with, and they are placed in the front of your head, where they will be of most use to you. But if you want to see anything except in the direction you are facing, you must turn your head. I can’t do that, as I have no neck at all; so my eyes are placed near the top of my head, where I can see in all directions at once. I must always be able to see quickly what is going on around me, for I have many enemies. Snakes, big birds, and even poultry think a toad makes a lovely dinner. But my eyes are good for something else too. You have probably noticed that my mouth is nice and big. That is

so I can get a large bug in it. But after it is in my mouth, I have to have something with which to force it down my throat. You get your food down with your tongue and some muscles which are in the back of your mouth, but I need my tongue for other things; and besides, I have a much simpler way—for I do it with my eyes."

"With your eyes?" and Laddie's eyes now protruded almost as much as the toad's.

"Yes," answered the toad, carelessly. "I just draw them down into my mouth, and so push the bug farther down. And it doesn't hurt me in the least."

"O, I am *so* glad I got acquainted with you! You are very different from my other friends. But you haven't been here all the time, have you? I have worked a lot in my garden, and I never saw you till a few days ago. I didn't even know your name, so I had to call the farmer and ask him."

"Yes, and he only told you I was a garden toad. He didn't know my company name at all. I am really Mrs. Bufo Americanus, and wise people have only lately found out the truth about me. The humans used to believe I was closely related to the reptile family. Ugh! As if I had anything in common with a snake," and she twitched convulsively at the mere idea. "They

know now I belong to a much more respectable family. Why, I, with my cousins—the frogs and tree-toads—date back just as far as the family to which the snakes belong. We are a distinct family by ourselves, I would have you know. Indeed, you are just as closely related to the snakes as I am, and some day you can ask Mother Dear to tell you why; but it is too long a story to start to-night.”

“O, I did hope you would tell me some kind of a story!” replied Laddie, in a very disappointed tone. “Why, you did not even tell me how long you had been here, when I asked you.”

“Well, Laddie, I must confess your bright eyes spied me the first day I came to your garden.”

“I am so glad. And now, won’t you tell me where you came from? You see, my garden has been planted several weeks now, and you might have been getting bugs here all this time.”

“O, I have not been idle! The bugs in the big garden kept me busy, I can tell you.”

“The big garden? Do you mean *our* big garden?”

“Why, of course,” replied the toad. “Whose garden would I work in, if not in ours?”

“And you belong here on the farm?” Laddie was plainly delighted.

"Why, of course," replied the toad again. "I have lived right here for more than twenty-five years, and expect to live here as much longer. I am the oldest inhabitant of the farm. O, of course, I am not as old as The Giant and some of the other trees, but I am the oldest living creature! And, Laddie, I have seen a good deal in my quiet life."

"I am sure of it," Laddie warmly assured her. "It was very good of you to leave the big garden and come to my little one. I certainly appreciate it."

"O, I heard a small boy was having a hard time of it over here with the bugs! I was sorry for him, and thought I had better come over and help him. I am glad I did, for he certainly needed me. I rather wanted to get acquainted with him, too, for I had been hearing a great deal about him."

"O-h! And what did you hear?" asked the delighted lad.

"Well," and here the toad deliberately winked again at Laddie, "I heard for one thing that he was *very* fond of stories. But then—that was probably exaggerated."

"O, no, it wasn't! I do love stories. And I do wish you would tell me a nice one," the boy

pleaded. "Did you spend the winter in the big garden? It must have been very cold there."

"No; I spent it sleeping in the ground the same as I always do. But I suppose I might as well tell you about it. Last fall, when the weather grew cool, I began to move more sluggishly than I had been doing. I lost my appetite for bugs; which, indeed, were getting scarce. Soon I became very sleepy, though I still managed to hop slowly about. All the time I was looking for a place in which to take my winter's nap.

"One day I came to a stone wall. It was now very cold, and I was so tired and sleepy I could not hop any more. So when I saw a hole in the ground between two of the stones, I thought it would be a good place for me. The mouth of the hole was covered with cobwebs, so I knew the animal that dug it had deserted it. I crawled in a little way, and finding a place where the dirt was soft enough for me to dig, kicked it up with the long toes of my hind feet till I had entirely covered myself with it. Then I got into a comfortable position and went to sleep.

"As it grew colder my body also grew colder, till my heart almost stopped beating. It was a very hard winter, so I have been told; but I slept through it without feeling anything. But

when the warm spring came, it melted the snow about the wall, and the heat gradually penetrated into the earth till it warmed me through and started my heart beating again. Then I awoke and stretched myself. As it grew still warmer, I began to feel hungry. Hunger, among us animals, is the great spur to activity. Perhaps I should have been there yet if it had not been for that spur.

"But as it was, I crawled slowly and clumsily out of my grave, and out of the hole into the sunlight again. I sat there for some time, watching for bugs. How nice and warm the sun did seem! But food was not very plentiful yet, so when the sun set I crawled back to the wall again, partly in hopes of finding more bugs, and partly because the stones held the heat and made it warmer there.

"During the night I heard some of my cousins singing, and it reminded me it was time to go back to my old home down in the swamp. You see, we toads have a great family reunion in the swamps each spring; and, of course, I always make it a point to be present. So I started off at once by slow hops to cross the field, and as I got warmed up to it I was able to hop faster. But every few feet I had to stop to rest, or

the exertion would have been too much for me; for we toads are not built to go very far at one time.

"Daylight found me in what is now Mother Dear's big flower-garden, so I dug a little hole like this one in which to hide myself; for it is not comfortable traveling over the dry earth when the sun is hot. It is also dangerous for us to go about much in the daytime. Then, too, I was in no hurry to get there, for I thought I was early.

"That night I heard the singing again; but it was so much plainer I knew the pond could not be far off, and also that the males were already there. I hopped along hurriedly now, and towards morning reached the edge of the pond. Yes, they were all there, so I hopped over the edge, and slid into the water.

"I found I was late. I had crawled in so deep for my long nap, the sun had not called me soon enough. All the toads from meadow, field, and garden were celebrating the return of spring. Of course very few of those I had known the year before were there, because so many had been killed by accidents, eaten by snakes and owls, or perished during the severe winter.

"But I soon made a lot of new friends, and it was a merry time—the holidays of the toads' calendar. There we swam about—you can see

from my feet I can swim beautifully,—talked of old times and compared experiences. There I found a mate, and life was one long round of pleasure—our nights being spent in singing in great choruses. Some of us would start up a merry wac-wac-wac, and then from another part of the pond would come the same refrain, until all our voices arose in a great volume of sweet melody. We toads may not be considered handsome, but we certainly can sing at these reunions, even though our song is but a simple one.”

The toad had evidently finished; but Laddie was far from being satisfied and so began to ask questions.

“But what makes you hold your reunions in such a place as a swamp? I think it is a horrid place, and I am not allowed to even go near it. I would be glad to have you hold your next one on our lawn,” he invited, hospitably.

“O, we couldn’t do that! You see, we have to go to the swamp so we can lay our eggs in the water. Our ancestors once lived in water the same as fish; and though we grown-ups are able to breathe oxygen out of the air the same as you do, our babies have only gills instead of lungs, and they must get their oxygen out of the water.

And so you see we are forced to go where our children can thrive best."

"Do tell me about your eggs and children," Laddie begged.

"Well, the swamp had already been divided up with our cousins, each species keeping to its own part. We garden toads took possession of a place where the water was about a foot deep and with weeds growing at the bottom. Then my mate and I searched till we found a nice place where I could lay my eggs. We did not build a nest as birds do, but chose a shallow, secluded spot; and as we floated on top of the water I proceeded to lay about ten thousand eggs, which is a very ordinary number for a toad."

"My, that was a lot! How big were your eggs?"

"They were little black specks about one-twentieth of an inch long and were held together by a long strip of jelly-like substance, in which I had placed them. This strip of jelly sank down towards the bottom immediately, caught on the water-weeds and was held there. After being in the water a few minutes it swelled and became white; but it could not be seen, because it was soon covered with mud."

"What a funny way to treat your eggs! Didn't you have to keep them warm?"

"O, no! The water did that for me, and the jelly-like covering kept them from being eaten. And so I left them to grow by themselves. If the weather had been cold it would have taken them weeks to develop; but as it was warm they grew rapidly. In little over a week the eggs had become tadpoles, and had bored their way out through the jelly. They had a head, body, and tail; but they could not see yet. Instead of a mouth they had two little suckers, by means of which they clung to the water-plants; and what nourishment they needed they absorbed through the skin."

"But why didn't you feed them and take care of them?" asked Laddie, impatiently. "That's what mothers always do, you know, Mrs. Toad."

"Yes, but toad-mothers don't. We think our children should be independent from the start; and, after all, a mother could do little to help them. They were but three weeks old when both eyes and mouths were open; and now they could see, they swam rapidly about in search of food. Their little lives were full of excitement, for their enemies were beginning to eat them by the hundreds. We would have no children at all if we did not lay a great many eggs, because so many of them perish before they have a chance to grow up. When they were six weeks old



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they began to grow hind legs, which they quickly learned to use in swimming, and two weeks later the front ones could also be seen. Soon their tails were entirely absorbed, and my children at last had become toads. But food is harder to get in the swamp than here in the garden, and our enemies are more numerous. I began to tire of this water-life and longed to be on our farm again. So one night I started out, and gradually worked my way back to the big garden. And glad enough I was to get here too. But see!" suddenly straightening up on her short, front legs; "I believe an earthworm is just coming out of his hole for supper. He's a big fellow, too, and would make a fine meal for me if I could catch him."

The toad gave a couple of short hops and then sat erect, looking directly down into the ground. Laddie could not see anything, so he crawled up a little closer on his hands and knees. Slowly the pointed head of an earthworm appeared. The toad kept very still, evidently watching for her chance. The worm began to feel around in search of food. Suddenly, as though scenting an enemy, he drew his head back into his burrow.

"Well, you almost caught me that time, didn't you?" came a small voice from within the ground.

"Why is it you worms are always so afraid of me? One would think I was hunting you all the time, from the way you act."

"Well, you were after me then."

"Huh! Earthworms make pretty poor eating," and the toad tried very hard to appear disgusted. "I much prefer little bugs I can swallow easily; and when there are plenty of them, I take nothing else. In my long life I have eaten very few of you fellows indeed."

"Yes, and I would have been one of the very few in another minute. You are a perfect cannibal—yes, worse; for I have heard that you would eat even your own children if you were hard up. Why, I wouldn't touch anything that is alive; but as for you, you wouldn't eat anything that is dead."

"Now, don't get so worked up over it; and don't, I beg of you, get me mixed with my frog cousins, who do eat their children if food is scarce. But, I confess, I always take my food fresh. Who ever heard of a toad eating stale meat? But you worms eat any dead thing you happen to find lying around."

"Quite true. I would starve to death before I would kill any creature," asserted the worm. "I don't believe it is right. We must live and let live, you know."

"Now see here; let's settle this thing once for all. We both live here in a garden, and regard the humans as our masters, don't we?"

"We certainly do."

"And whatever the humans do is all right, is it not?"

"It certainly is."

"And if I do the same as they I am perfectly justified, am I not?"

"You certainly are."

"Well, then, allow me to inform you the humans have animals live with them, so when they are hungry they can catch one and *eat* it. I do the very same thing, and so it must be right. Now what have you to say?" the toad demanded, triumphantly.

"O, yes! I know all about that. But they don't eat them alive as you do. They always kill them first. So they really eat dead things, just as I do. You never saw a human swallow anything alive, as you do."

The worm was becoming much excited over the question; but, to the toad's chagrin, he still stayed inside his hole.

"Yes, but you eat only what someone else has killed. You don't kill anything yourself; and so you do not do as the humans do." The

toad, now feeling the trend of the argument against her, was ready to catch at a straw.

"I know I don't kill. But I don't eat much meat anyway; so why argue about it? You kill everything you can catch."

"Ah! There you are wrong," retorted the toad, quickly; glad that she now had something she could safely talk about. "I do not kill everything. I do not catch creatures like you, except when other food is scarce. But I do kill bugs which would eat up the property of the humans. I eat flies and mosquitoes, which bring them disease; also grasshoppers, locusts, plant-lice, spiders—in short, all the things the humans call pests. My work saves the farmer about fifteen dollars each year, and I never do any harm. The humans know this, and are the best friends I have."

"Yes, that may all be true; but I still think I am more like the humans, for you never eat dirt. I eat it, and the humans eat it too."

"The humans do not eat dirt," contradicted the toad.

"Yes, they do; and I know it because I heard them say so."

"How did you hear that?" much surprised.

"Why," explained the worm with an air of

superior wisdom, "the other day a little girl was out here in the garden with a cookie which she dropped on the ground, and her mother told her to eat it anyway, because she had to eat a peck of dirt sometime."

"Huh! A peck isn't much." The toad spoke in her most irritating tone.

"I know it isn't, but you see they do eat dirt, don't you? And they eat vegetables that grow here in the garden, just as I do. I eat leaves, both fresh and dried. But best of all I like onions; and next I prefer red cabbage, horse-radish, celery, or carrots. So you see, Mrs. Toad, it is really I who eat most like the humans."

Evidently the toad now felt that arguing would not succeed in bringing the worm within her reach, for she changed her manner abruptly. "Well, Laddie certainly keeps this place nice and moist for us to work in, doesn't he?"

"Yes, indeed; but I do wish he would not clear all the leaves away so carefully. There has been none near my hole for a week now. It makes it very hard for me. You know I can come out only at night, and this time I hoped I might find one. Any kind of a leaf would do; for if it were too large I could bite off a piece, but a small one I would drag right down into my

burrow where I could use it at my leisure. I suppose there are plenty of leaves out there somewhere; but there is none within my reach, and I do need one."

"If I find a leaf for you, will you come out and get it?" the toad offered, eagerly.

"No, indeed! I never leave my hole entirely, but always keep at least the end of my tail in it. I have to be very careful about that; for if I once left it, I would never be able to find it again."

"But on rainy days I often see worms crawling about on the ground, and those are the ones I usually eat."

"Yes, and those are probably sick worms. But frequently they are drowned out by a heavy rain, because they neglected to pack the mouths of their holes with leaves, dirt, or pebbles, to keep the water out. Sometimes in the spring we come out for a little while in the morning; but after that nothing but accident can make us leave our homes. But I enjoy lying just inside the mouth of my burrow. I spend hours every day in that way. Of course I would be safer 'way down in my hole, for then no bird could get me; but the air is not as good down there, and I like it better up here anyway."

"You'd like it better yet, if you would only

come outside like other creatures. You seem to be filled with fear all the time."

"O, no, I'm not! I'm filled with wisdom. And so I'll stay right here, thank you. You see I'm an old fellow, and have had some bad scares which have taught me to be cautious. A very strange thing happened to me once. I was crawling peacefully through my burrow, when suddenly something sharp cut me right in two in the middle. It was a human digging in the soil who had accidentally thrust his spade through me. It didn't hurt much, because worms don't feel any real pain; but of course I did a lot of wriggling. Now the peculiar part is this—I healed both of the cut ends, and became two separate worms. One end of me started to make a burrow for himself, and I have never seen him since. But the other end—which was the head end—is myself; and I have now grown to be just as long as before. That is something a toad couldn't do. If a farmer cut you in two, it would be all over with you."

"O, I don't know about that!" replied the toad. "When I was a polliwog I could have grown a new tail, and as a young toad I might have grown a new leg; but I must admit, if I had been cut in half I could never have become

two toads. That is all right for worms to do; but farmers don't cut toads in two, so we do not need any such tricks."

"Yes; but suppose a snake bit your head off?"

"But he wouldn't. He would swallow me whole."

"Well, it's a good thing to be able to do any-way."

There was now a pause, during which the toad snapped up a bug.

The worm resumed the conversation. "I have done a lot of work in this garden."

"Huh! What?" incredulously.

"Why, I helped plow the soil. That's just it. I don't care what you think, of course; but often the humans don't appreciate what we earth-worms are doing for them."

"But I saw the farmer spade this garden and get the ground ready himself, before Laddie planted it; so it could not have needed plowing."

"Anyone would think you were a human, to hear you talk. Got the ground ready, indeed! Why, many plants wouldn't grow at all, but for us. The humans only get the ground ready for us to work in. We have been all through this ground many times, making little burrows through which the water, that Laddie puts on

top of the ground, can find its way down to the roots of the plants. With the help of that water, we keep the ground soft and the clods broken up. If it were not for our burrows, the water would remain on the surface and most of it evaporate."

"How do you make these burrows anyway?"

"Why," explained the worm, "I do it with my pointed head, which I force between the loose lumps of dirt to push them aside. I work myself along in this way, and so make a passage a little larger than my body. I can work very quickly in soft soil."

"But I wouldn't call that plowing. That is only making holes."

"Yes; but I do really plow besides. Plowing means turning over the soil, and that is exactly what I do. I work a great deal in hard earth, which is very difficult and slow. When I come to such a spot, I moisten a place with my saliva and then eat the particles of dirt as they loosen. I do this partly to get the food which is in it, but also because I must get rid of the dirt in some way. Then at night I crawl up—this time tail first—to the mouth of my hole, and excrete this waste dirt on top of the ground. So I am constantly bringing soil, which the humans do not

reach with their plows, to the surface, and in that way keep it all well mixed. But I would like to know what is 'way down in the earth. I have been down only three feet, but some explorers have gone down about eight feet. Then they could find no more food, so they were forced to turn back. But if someone could succeed in reaching the bottom, he might find very much better soil than any we have up here; and then I would bring it up to help make this garden grow faster." The worm seemed to have forgotten he was talking to an enemy.

"Well, I don't care what is in the earth, because it is too dark down there for me. A little hole is a nice place to sleep in, but beyond that I prefer to stay on top. But I should like to know how far the surface of the earth goes. Now that would be something worth finding out. I have traveled around a good deal, but never could I see or hear of any end. And if the earth is as thick as it is wide, you will never find the bottom, I can tell you."

"I don't believe it is more than fifteen or twenty feet thick, anyway, for there would be no sense in making it any thicker when we couldn't use it. Of course the earth has to have a big surface; but the inside, beyond a few feet, is no

good to anyone. I have always thought it a big waste to have so much soil under the trees, for worms don't like it there a bit. But we all find something we could improve."

There was a long pause. They appeared to be thinking. But now Laddie, who had from the first sympathized with the poor, hungry worm, reached out quietly and picked a piece of onion top, which he dropped near the mouth of the burrow. The toad, seeing something fall, hopped quickly to one side. Then realizing there was nothing to fear, she turned around to watch the worm, who had not moved.

"There's a piece of onion right by your burrow," called the toad. "It is a nice piece, too," she added, tantalizingly.

"Don't you suppose I can smell it?" retorted the worm. "And when you go to a safe distance, I will come out and get it."

There was silence again, but the toad was watching closely. Laddie began to think the worm had gone to bed without his supper, when he saw him appearing little by little from the burrow. The worm felt around with his head for a moment, and then pointed it straight up into the air as though searching for the toad. He must have been satisfied she was really gone,

for now he crawled out farther and farther until only his tail remained in the hole. Reaching the onion top, he grasped it by the end with his mouth, which he pressed together like lips—for he had no teeth—and then commenced to back slowly into his burrow.

Quickly something sprang forward, and, to Laddie's consternation, he saw the worm's head disappear in the toad's mouth. The worm tried to squirm down into his hole, but it was too late; and soon he was drawn clear out upon the surface.

But now the toad was having trouble in managing such a big mouthful, for the worm was still struggling and sometimes succeeded in freeing himself a bit; but each time that awful tongue appeared, and each time more of his body was drawn out of sight. Half of him had disappeared, when suddenly the head worked its way out at one side of the toad's mouth, and the worm proceeded to extricate himself quite as fast as the tail end was being drawn in. Truly he was a mouthful.

The toad began to use her front feet to help poke the ends into her mouth, but it was no use. The worm was entirely too large to be gulped down in such a manner. So at last giving it up she opened her mouth and the worm quickly

rolled out. He at once began to crawl away, searching hastily for a hiding place, for he could not find his burrow where he would have been so safe.

The toad looked after him in a very disgusted manner, and opened her great mouth several times as though trying to get rid of a bad taste.

"Ugh! I like little worms well enough," she murmured to herself, "but those big fellows aren't fit for anyone to eat. And that slime that covered him—wow! I can taste it yet. It seems to be all over me," and she opened her mouth again, trying to spit it out, but found she could not. "No more of those big fellows for me. I guess I'd better stick to bugs anyway after this," and she settled down with half-closed eyes to meditate upon her new resolution.

Meanwhile the worm was very busy making a new burrow for himself. Laddie, who had been listening and watching almost breathlessly, was now anxious for the worm to find his old home once more. But he hated to touch him, for he disliked the feel of squirming things.

And then he remembered all the work the worm had done for him; so shutting his teeth together tight, he reached out, picked up the worm gently and dropped him down at the mouth of his old

home. Perhaps the worm recognized the place, but anyway he started immediately to crawl down into the hole, and Laddie was well pleased to have been of service.

Just then he heard a voice call: "Hey, there, little farmer! what are you doing out here? Don't you know all young things should be in bed by this time?"

It was the farmer himself, and Laddie at once began to tell him the wonderful story he had just heard and its strange conclusion.

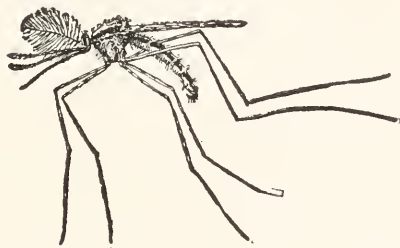
But when he had finished, he was much surprised to hear the farmer say: "O, Laddie, you must have been dreaming! It is lucky I came and woke you up. You simply *couldn't* have heard it. Why, worms are deaf, for they have no ears; and they are blind, for they have no eyes. And they can't possibly talk, for they have no vocal organs. And as for the toad—O, anybody would think they were human, to hear you. But you see it was all a dream, don't you? Better start for bed, Laddie."

The boy knew he had been awake all the while, but, realizing he could not convince his friend of this fact, he simply said, "I only hope all my dreams will be as pleasant," and started happily for the house.

Now the darkness gathers,
Stars begin to peep,
Birds, and beasts, and flowers
Soon will be asleep.

.
Through the long night watches
May Thine Angels spread
Their white wings above me,
Watching round my bed.

BARING-GOULD.



“Come, let us live with our children!”

FROEBEL.

THE ADVENTURER

LADDIE was turning restlessly from side to side in his bed, vainly trying to go to sleep. It had been an exceedingly hot day, and even with the going down of the sun had come little perceptible coolness. The curtains, hanging lifelessly at the windows, were pulled back as far as possible to let in what air might be stirring. The screens had also been removed, but still the room seemed stifling.

"O, dear! It's so hot!" groaned the lad, wearily.

"Of course it's hot. But who cares?" came a voice unexpectedly out of the darkness.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" Laddie demanded, sitting up the better to see. But his eyes fell only upon familiar objects.

Buzz! Buzz-z! Buzz-z-z! The sound came ever nearer.

"O, now I know who you are. You are nothing but a mosquito."

"Nothing but a mosquito! Well, I like that. Why, what else would I want to be, pray?"

"Well, you might be something less of a pest, and—let me tell you—no one loves you at all. In fact, everyone fears you, and would put your entire family out of existence if he could."

"Pugh! Who's afraid? You needn't think you can scare me, for you humans are much too lazy and indifferent to attack such a big proposition as that."

Laddie was becoming angry. "O, we are, are we? Well, you will very soon see what will happen to you, for I am going to call Mother Dear to bring a light; and when we find you—" Laddie was already half out of bed.

"Hold on, there! I haven't done anything to you, have I? And I don't intend to, either, for I have just had a nice big supper, and my stomach is quite full. So there is no danger of my biting you—for I suppose that is why you object so strongly to my company?"

"Yes, it is," answered Laddie, not at all convinced of his uninvited guest's honesty. "You might not bite me now, but how do I know you would not before morning? No one can trust you fellows. No, sir! I shall call Mother Dear, just as I said."

"One moment! One moment, please! If you didn't want me to come in, why did you open your windows so wide? Tell me that."

"It was so hot," explained Laddie.

"O, yes! You humans make me tired. Hot? Huh! You always have some excuse to give why you shouldn't take your medicine when you get into trouble. I tell you that was an open invitation to me, and I accepted. But there"—as Laddie made another start for the door—"I will make a bargain with you. If you will let me rest here a while, I will tell you the story of my past and present. What my future is to be, goodness knows. And though I have not been living here long, I have heard that a certain boy named Laddie was never known to turn a story down. Is it a go?"

Laddie did want to hear that story awfully, but Mother Dear would be displeased at his entertaining a guest so harmful and poisonous; so he shook his head bravely, though his "No" came out rather reluctantly.

"Well, then—you observe I am not easily discouraged—how about this? I did mean to spend the night with you; but if you simply won't have me, I will go when I have finished. Now I leave it to you if this isn't fair. I promise

not to bite you, to tell you a story brim full of adventure, and to go immediately after the story is finished, if you will let me rest here quietly till then, and call no one to disturb me. Again, is it a go?"

"Do you swear it on your honor? But no, how can you? For you have no honor."

"No; but I have something that I hold just as sacred. For without that I could not fill my stomach when I am hungry; neither could I bite people so beautifully. But then, we won't talk about that," he added, hurriedly. "So I swear by my *proboscis* to keep my promise to you," and he buzzed fiercely about Laddie's head to emphasize the oath.

"All right, then. Fire away! Only go back to your place on the wall. Your flying about makes me nervous. And remember, if you start to leave one thing out of the story, I will soon put an end to you. Now go ahead!" and Laddie settled back on his pillows, expectantly.

"Well,—to begin at the very beginning—I was born over in Jersey; but that is no disgrace, I take it. And some must be born there, for we cannot all be born in New York, like you. Though when we want a real good time we go there quick enough. Why, I had the time of

my life in New York. But first, let me introduce myself properly. My real name is Mr. Anopheles—but plain mosquito will do. I don't care what you call me, as long as I have a good time and get enough to eat.

"You humans hate us mosquitoes; but we return good for evil—as we always do when there is anything to be gained by it—and we love you. Of course, it is more a matter of stomach-love than heart-love, though. You talk of exterminating us. Well, go ahead! I'll bet you don't get me.

"That is a comfortable bed you're in. I was born in a tin can. Now that is not so bad as it sounds; indeed, we consider it quite luxurious. Most of our family are born in the marshes; but when it comes to a choice between a marsh and a back-yard tin can, I'll take the tin can every time. There's more excitement in it.

"Of course I wasn't there at the time, but I fancy it all happened about like this. My mother was flying around one day in search of something, when she reached a small back yard. Now evidently the people living in the house which belonged to this yard had recently had canned lobster for dinner; and the cook being too lazy to carry the empty can to the rubbish

heap, had given it a toss through the door, where it landed in the grass, right side up.

"And then it must have rained; for when Mother found it a few days later, it was full of water, and was exactly what she was searching for—a nice place in which to lay some eggs. In the water were several million water bugs, and as many more tiny water plants. She knew these would make the best of food material for us, and as she had just had a good meal of human blood herself she left them all untouched. But you needn't think she was unselfish about it, for a grown mosquito never eats such food.

"After deciding conditions were all right, she proceeded to lay about one hundred eggs on top of the water. Then she flew away, and left the eggs to themselves. Of course there was danger that someone would discover and remove the can, but Mother took a chance on that; for she knew that you humans would walk all over a tin can many times before you even saw it. And of course it would have been very easy to destroy us while we were developing from the egg to the full-grown mosquito; but I think Mother understood human nature well, for I am happy to say none of these calamities befell us.

"I never saw my mother, and I think it must

be a perfect nuisance to have one hanging around all the time. I tell you, brothers and sisters are bad enough; and then I always did believe in being my own boss.

"Well, it was just four days after Mother's visit to the tin can, when our little colony woke up and began to wiggle. We were only tiny worm-like specks as yet, so small you could hardly see us without a microscope. And we still had to pass through the larval and pupal stages before we could become mosquitoes. But we were all there just the same, and would soon be ready for business.

"I can remember swimming about in the water with my tracheal tube or nose sticking out only enough to let me breathe, and all the rest of my body lying just beneath the surface. I always swam backwards. My neck was very thin, and so I could turn my head around easily, which was a big help in feeding. I also had a number of long hairs about my mouth; and by keeping them moving back and forth, I would make a little current in the water about my head, and catch the food as it floated by.

"But gradually I grew bigger and stronger. Then I could let myself sink 'way down and hunt for food in the slime at the bottom; though I

had to keep continually wiggling up to the surface for air, just as you humans do when you dive.

"I had no love for the rest of the family. Why should I have? They were only eating up all the food, though at first there seemed to be enough for all. But little by little the water was evaporating from our can, and soon the struggle for existence had begun. The strongest survived, but only by taking the food from the weakest. *I* belonged to the strongest. There is no place in mosquito life for charity, and when a fellow gets knocked out we hold no funeral over him. It is each one for himself.

"But after all I had a rather jolly time. Fighting with the others for food, and forcing my way up through the water for air, were my only occupations; but they made me strong. Each bug I won was a victory; each one I lost was a lesson. The tin can was our world. I knew nothing else, and wanted nothing more. I did not dream there could be anything better anywhere.

"Then one day another rain came, and filled our can to overflowing. This decreased our number still more; for many were swept over the side, where they perished. You see, we were not able yet to exist without water. I was glad to see them go. And now, out of a good-sized

family, only a few of us remained. But if there were fewer to be fed, there was also less to feed on; for the overflow had swept much food away as well.

"About this time, I passed from the larval to the pupal stage. I swam around on top of the water, for it seemed dark to me now down at the bottom; and only when something came near to scare me, could I be made to dive again. There was still time for you humans to destroy us; but no one did, and so we kept on growing.

"I had been slowly developing something which proved to be wings, and one day I felt a strong desire to try them. I crawled up out of the water late one afternoon, and stood on the edge of the can looking around.

"I saw we were surrounded by some rather tall grass and weeds, and something within told me I might find those plants more to my taste than water bugs. I looked down into the can; but it was so dark, and cold, and wet, I decided at once not to go back at all. I spread my wings, then flapped them very rapidly; and in another instant I had landed lightly on a blade of grass.

"Then I flew over to another blade and determined to test it for food. I pierced it with my long proboscis, injected some fluid to prepare its juices for my digestive organs, and then slowly

sucked it all back through my proboscis into my stomach. No more fighting over water bugs for me, for this was by far the best meal I had ever eaten; and I had now outgrown a water-bug diet, anyhow. I laughed to think of my brothers and sisters back there still struggling for food, while here I was completely surrounded by it.

“‘Well, let them fight it out,’ I thought. ‘They never did anything for me, so why should I go back to tell them about this place? Let them find it for themselves.’

“I stood there several minutes, resting; and then without taking a single step, I merely spread my wings again and flew to another blade a few feet away. We mosquitoes never walk, because we have a much easier way to get about; and besides, walking is too slow for us.

“I made several flights from blade to blade; partly because I enjoyed using my wings, and partly because I wanted to get farther away from the rest of my family. I remembered they, too, had been growing wings, and might find me if I remained in the vicinity of my old home. I wished I might never see them again.

“But the plot of grass was not very large, and I soon reached the edge of it, where stood the human-house. Soon a woman came out upon

the steps; and as she was the first human I had ever seen, I decided to look her over carefully. I thought I could do this best from a place on her left shoulder, which I proceeded to take. I now noticed half a dozen of my family had ventured to leave home also, and were already clinging to her back.

"She evidently was aware of their presence; for she took off her apron and slapped her shoulders with it a few times, which frightened the others away. But I flew to her neck just at the edge of the hair, and clung on boldly. Satisfied she was rid of us, she then carried me into the kitchen; and as it was nice and warm there, I liked it much better than the grass plot. Having you humans carry me where I wished to go seemed a very easy way of getting about, and I resolved then and there to see something of the world.

"But if I was to live in a house long, I must have food, and then I noticed the nice, soft skin I was standing on. It occurred to me to puncture it with my proboscis, and see if I could find anything there to eat. I did so; and after injecting a little saliva and sucking up a little pre-digested blood, I found it was far better even than plant food. I stood there and sucked my stomach full of the delicious stuff. Marsh-born

mosquitoes may have to acquire a taste for blood, but it appealed strongly to my stomach from the first.

"I still had my proboscis deep in the skin, when up came the woman's hand, and with a quick slap I was caught between her fingers, quite stunned by the blow. She squeezed me to her neck for an instant, then held me out in her hand to inspect me.

"Well, you'll never bite me again, you pesky thing!" she said, angrily, and threw me on the floor.

"I did not understand you humans then as well as I do now; so I lay there quietly waiting for what might happen next, and resolved if I ever got out of that place alive, I would be good for the rest of my life. We all get righteous after our first knock-out; but with me, as with you humans, it did not last long.

"When I saw I had been entirely forgotten, I began to think the house was a comfortable place to live in after all; and as blood now pleased me best in the food line, I could get this easiest by living with the humans. But I did not intend to confine myself to one home. O, no! I would see something of life; and as I was a brainy chap, I determined to live entirely by my wits.

"I have often heard you humans say travel is

in itself a broad and liberal education. I had just received my first lesson in this kind of education. Hereafter I would watch my victims closely when biting them, and if they ever caught me again they would have to be much quicker than I.

“This shows I did some serious thinking as I lay there. I now straightened out my legs, smoothed out my wings, gradually fixed myself up, and then stood a moment on my six legs before trying to fly. I decided I would be safest on the ceiling; so up I went, and stood clinging there till my nerves got a bit steadier.

“That was the beginning of my career of adventure and graft. The easy but exciting life appealed strongly to me. My brothers and sisters probably all went to a marsh to live on plant juice, raise families, and lead a be-good-and-you-will-be-happy kind of life. But—no, thank you! None of that for me.

“After a time another woman came into the kitchen; and when she started to go back again, I decided to go, too, and see something of the rest of the house. So I flew down to a spot between her shoulders, and which I at once saw would be difficult for her to reach. But I did not try to bite her as I did not need food, and I was

now starting on another adventure. She carried me through a hall, up a flight of stairs, and into a bedroom. There I promptly flew up to the ceiling, where I could see all that was going on.

"In the bed was a sick man, shaking all over. The woman could not put enough covers on to keep him warm. But after a while the man said he was burning up, and his face was now very red. I stayed up on the ceiling till the man felt better and went to sleep. Then the woman went out and left him, as she thought, alone.

"But *I* was there, and was only waiting for just such an opportunity. I had become hungry again; and in some way I knew the sick man was too weak to do me any harm, so I could bite him as much as I liked. May be you will think that a mean trick. But I don't, because this life is a serious business; and as you humans have no scruples about killing us, why should we have about biting you when you are asleep or sick?

"So I flew down and lit on the end of his nose, because that was the most conspicuous thing about him; and as I felt perfectly safe I did not hurry, but looked around for a good spot to stick him. I chose a place on the very end, right in the center of a big brown freckle, thinking it might taste better; but I could see no difference.

Blood is blood. I stuck my proboscis in good and deep, injected my saliva, and began to suck. It was the best meal yet; for you see, I took my time and enjoyed myself thoroughly. When I had filled my stomach, I flew up to the ceiling again and went to sleep.

"The next morning the doctor came in and said the sick man had malaria; but of course that meant nothing to me. Well, I was having a good time, so I hung around. The doctor came every day. One day I heard him tell them to be very careful to keep all mosquitoes out of the room; because if they bit the sick man they would get the disease, and in eight days they would be giving it to other people when they bit them.

"I have always had a grudge against that doctor for not saying so in the first place. There I had been biting the sick man every day and enjoying it, not knowing anything would happen to me. I suppose you will say I was properly punished, as I was not feeling very well just then. Those malaria bugs had been boring their way through my stomach and they had made me rather sick. Up to this time I had bitten you humans only when I needed food; but now I determined to consider every human my foe to pay for giving me those malaria germs.

"But as a search for mosquitoes was now begun, I decided that was no longer any place for me; so taking a long chance, I flew down into the doctor's hat which lay on the table, for I had had enough. I had barely hidden myself when he picked it up quickly with his medicine case, and soon we were outside, where he cranked up his motor car and away we went.

"It was a derby hat I found myself in, and at the side were some small round holes; so I flew up to these and looked out. Everything I saw was strange to me, and very interesting. After a time we stopped at another house, and having no desire to visit more sick people, I watched my chance to escape. Soon the doctor raised his hat to a lady passing by, and out I flew.

"This lady looked good to me, so I lit quickly on her back as she moved along. I don't like people's backs as well as I do hats for traveling, but I find them safer because I can fly at any time. At the next corner the lady took me into a street car, and hiding in a window I rode safely till we came to the Jersey City ferry. I was anxious to get to the other side, so I hid myself again—this time among the feathers on a girl's hat. I was glad to have such a snug place, for it seemed very cold and windy crossing the ferry.

“And so I reached New York at last. However I determined to stay in the warm feathers for a while, for I had no idea where to go or what to do in such a big, noisy place. Before long the girl entered a large building on Broadway. She gave me a ride up in the elevator, and then took me into an office where she introduced me to her boss. Not a formal introduction, you understand; but sufficient to make me feel acquainted at once. I was enjoying myself immensely, and I began to see where my next meal was coming from.

“I flew up to the ceiling, where I always feel so safe, and tried to make some future plans; but the air was close in the office, and I got so sleepy I had to take a nap. When I woke up, I was as hungry as a bear. The man was very busy over some papers; so I flew down and quietly commenced to feast upon his cheek. Slowly he raised his hand to scratch,—never thinking of mosquitoes,—but I saw him coming; and carefully drawing out my proboscis, I flew out of the open window. I hated to lose half of my lunch, but it really seemed necessary.

“Now I had not realized how high up we had been carried in that elevator; and when I flew out, the wind—which always sweeps around

those high buildings—took me with it in spite of all I could do. I don't know how long it was, nor how far I had been blown before I half tumbled, half flew against the window of a Fifth Avenue modiste. I zig-zagged along the glass till I found the lower part, which was open as I had hoped, and in I went. Then up to the ceiling I buzzed to see what I could discover.

"It was here I learned something about the habits of the wealthy. Ladies were constantly coming in to order gowns, and they always talked of where they were going to spend the summer. I found those in the best society *never* stayed in New York during the hot season, but went to places where people were not too busy to notice their new clothes.

"As far as I could learn, that was their chief reason for leaving town, and the heat was of minor importance; for they all agreed it would not be too hot in the city for their husbands. I wondered if those husbands were any relation to me; for it is never too hot for mosquitoes either. But I decided, if it was the proper thing to do, I would leave town later too. It was all very interesting to me, and I remained there for some time.

"One day I heard a stout lady say she was

going 'across the pond'; so thinking I might not meet her again, I hastened down to take a bite. I took it very deliberately, too, for she was so big and awkward I knew I had nothing to fear. I laughed in glee to see how angry she got; but she did not dare call for help, for that would only have drawn attention to her surplus flesh. I selected a place between her bare shoulders, but she was so fat I might safely have chosen any other part of her body. My, but I had a good one!

"But when I was through, I thought perhaps I had better move on; so I got into a taxicab with a lady, looking for more adventures. This soon proved stupid, so at my first opportunity I changed to an elevated train; and when I tired of that, I transferred to a baby carriage, where I made friends with a sleeping child.

"I had never tasted baby-blood before, so while the nurse wheeled us along I took a good, big suck. Hot days, but I liked it! It was the very best yet.

"I determined not to lose sight of that baby; so when we reached its home I went inside, prepared to settle down for some time. I had another good meal in the morning, but when the mother saw the bites you would have thought

something awful had happened. She gave orders to have the child kept covered with a net, and so I did not get a chance at it again for some days. But, believe me, I didn't starve; for the mother made very nice feeding, and I managed to stick her almost every day. The nurse also had her share of my attention.

"After a few days of this high living I noticed the baby's mother began to look very pale; and one day she had a chill, and it was a good one too. The nurse also commenced to look pretty seedy; but I didn't start to worry till the baby got sick. That upset the whole house, and everyone acted perfectly crazy. The doctor came, shook his head wisely and said, 'mosquitoes.' Hard slaps! He might as well have said 'poison' from the way they acted.

"Suppose I did give them malaria, why couldn't they be optimists and see they were lucky it was not my cousin Mr. Stegomyia who had bitten them; for in that case they might have had yellow fever. When will you humans learn to look on the bright side of things?

"I knew a search would be made for me at once, so I cleared out. I flew over into the next house, as the window was open temptingly, and there I saw a young girl absorbed in a book.

She was so crazy over it, she never noticed when I took my dinner from her arm. I then went up to the ceiling as usual, to digest it.

"But presently a man came in and said: 'The people next door have malaria. The baby is awfully sick, and the doctor says mosquitoes did it. I hope we haven't any in here.'

"He began looking around and soon spied me. I tried to fly to a place where I could hide; for he was after me with a newspaper, and got me so excited I could not find the open window. How I do hate doctors! They always get me into trouble. After a strenuous time with him, I managed to hide in a curtain. At last the search for me was given up, and as soon as they left the room I flew out of the window again. I suppose I did lots of damage before I left town, but I have always been sorry I did not get a bite of him too.

"A messenger boy was going by, so I joined him, and together we went down the street for several blocks. As he passed a vacant lot, he stopped and began throwing stones, which jolted me so hard I had to leave him. I now flew up to a window in a large apartment house. There was a screen in the window, to be sure; but there was plenty of room around the edges for hundreds of my family to go in and out.

"I hid myself on the wall till evening, when a man came in and went to bed. But first he spent a long time in looking for members of my family, as he was very nervous about being bitten. But he did not find me, of course, and after he was sound asleep I had my revenge; for I landed on his bald head and had a feast. I had just finished when he woke up; and realizing what had happened, he bounded out of bed and turned on a light. Good blood, but he was mad!

"As I wanted some fun I let him chase me. Up and down the room we went; but as he kept hitting a gouty toe, he would stop and dance on one foot a while, and say interesting things to me. How I did like to hear him! for his language was new and very fascinating. But after a time the chase became too tame for me, so I hid myself again. He was too sleepy to stay up longer, and soon we were both off to slumber-land. In the morning I started out in search of new adventures.

"And so the days have been full, and I have received my broad and liberal education. A week ago I found myself at the Grand Central Station, and that reminded me of my decision to follow the fashion and leave town. It was

not new gowns or hot weather that caused me to leave; but I was getting fat—as all New Yorkers do sooner or later—and I also needed to take a rest cure, for my nerves had received many shocks. And you know that is quite the correct thing to do; for city folks always work overtime at something, and are constantly being broken—or mended.

“Well, it was hot; so I let one of the porters put me on a parlor car.” Near me sat a plump, old man, nodding over his paper; and when he was fast asleep, I went down and had a good feed. That woke him up; and as we were just pulling into a station, I decided to light out.

“But things at the station were too slow for me, so I resolved to go farther. There was a grocery wagon going along the road, and I jumped on the horse’s back. I wanted awfully to try that horse’s blood; but as my stomach is far too small for me to feed so often, I had to be good. I found the country road very dusty; so when we reached Happy Days, I jumped off to look around.

“I am glad I came, for farm life was new to me. I have been here ever since, and my shattered nerves are steady once more. I have heard many queer stories, and got sick to death hearing

about the wonderful little master. It was Laddie this, and Laddie that, till it drove me nearly wild.

"I resolved not to leave here till I had had at least one good meal out of that same Laddie. But it has been very difficult to find a way into the house, for you humans here are too fussy for anything. You were always on the lookout for me; so when I saw the open windows to-night, I knew my time had come.

"You have always looked very tempting to me, and do yet. You remind me of that baby. I wonder if you would taste as good. And a promise is not such an awfully sacred thing. Now do you think it is? What?—I say—do you think it is? Laddie!—Are you asleep? Laddie!—O, well, then—if you are—I might as well——"

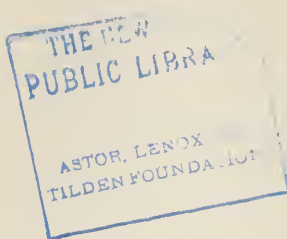
Just then Mother Dear tiptoed into the room with a candle, to see that all was well.

"—I might as well—*go*," finishing the sentence quickly, though sadly. And the Adventurer flew hurriedly out through the open window.

But it is still a question whether it was Mother Dear with a candle, or his sacred proboscis, that made him keep his promise.

What do you think?





THE NEW
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ASTOR, LENOX
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The green things heavy with pain,
Lift their languishing brows
From the highway's dust and its heat:
For thy beautiful daughter, the Rain.

KATHARINE TYNAN HINKSON.



'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home!
A charm from the skies seems to hallow us there,
Which, seek through the world, is ne'er met with else-
where.

Home! home! sweet, sweet home!
There's no place like home!

JOHN HOWARD PAYNE.

HEIMWEH

ONE morning when the rain came pelting down with no apparent intention of stopping, Daddie found his young son gazing disconsolately out of the window. "O, Laddie; what a long face!" he chaffed.

"It's enough to give any one a long face," Laddie retorted. "I had planned so many things to do to-day, and now everything is spoiled by this horrid rain."

"But surely, Laddie, you can find plenty to amuse you right here in the house? There are lots of books and pictures; and you certainly cannot have tried all your games, for you have hardly been in the house long enough to touch them for several weeks."

"I know, Daddie; but I don't feel like games. They are not alive. And though the books tell me stories, they are not true nor half as interesting as those my friends tell me."

"Come here, son; let's see just where the trouble lies. I did not think my boy would ever

be so cruel," and he drew Laddie down on to his knee.

"Cruel, Daddie; you know I am not," and his denial was most emphatic. "I wouldn't hurt anything for the world."

"So you don't think it cruel to keep things from having water to drink when they are very, very thirsty?"

"Who *dared* do that, Daddie?" the boy demanded wrathfully. "Let's go and see about it right away; and whoever did it, I hope you will scold well."

"Very well, Laddie. But I can stay right here and do all the scolding; for 'thou art the man,' my son," and Daddie looked very serious.

"Daddie! Daddie! I don't know what you mean. Tell me quickly!" entreated the boy, with eyes brimming over.

"What, more rain—and in the house too?" But as Laddie's lip trembled sorely, Daddie decided not to tease the child more.

"Well, Laddie, my boy, I will explain at once. You pretend to love everything that lives on our farm, and yet you had not noticed all the lovely flowers were hanging their heads from thirst, the grass had all turned yellow, our garden-stuff was not good any more, and even The Giant needed

a bath; and now, just when all of these friends are getting plenty of water to quench their thirst and have a nice bath besides, you cry and fret about it, instead of being glad for them. Isn't cruel the right word, Laddie?"

"O, Daddie! truly, I never thought of that. Of course they cannot go and get a drink when they want it, can they? O, now I am not sorry to see the nice rain any more! I just hope it will rain for weeks and weeks; so I do."

"Hold on, there! Too much rain is fully as bad as too little; but I think we shall have just the right amount, and all will be well again. But now let me tell you something that will take that sorry look quite away. We have had a stranger living with us for a couple of weeks; but as she was rather sickly and looked so forlorn, I decided to keep her out of your sight until she picked up a bit. That is the reason you have not made her acquaintance before. She came from a different land than ours, and everything is very strange to her. She is a foreigner, Laddie—lonesome and sad; and all of our kind treatment has not improved her a bit. But," and here Daddie's eyes twinkled, "I believe she knows the dandiest stories; for you see no one else on the place, not even Questions, has ever

traveled very far, and she has come nearly four thousand miles to reach this country. That's right, cheer up," smiling at Laddie's glowing face, "for I think she can help you pass a few hours very pleasantly."

"But perhaps she will not like to tell stories, being a foreigner?" Laddie suggested.

"I would at least give her a chance; and as she seems very lonely, I think she will be only too glad of your company."

"But who is she? And what is her name?" Laddie begged, anxious to be off.

"You will see for yourself who she is. And I really don't know her name, though I think 'Brownie' would be nice and appropriate; for she is a pretty, soft-brown color. You will probably find her under one of the sheds this rainy day; or perhaps she has been taken to one of the nice, comfortable stalls in the barn. Here comes Dickum; so slip on this rubber-coat and be off—both of you. Good luck!"

Laddie and Dickum ran rapidly down the driveway till they reached the big barn. As Laddie did not know what to look for, he proceeded to take the stalls systematically; but he had peeped into only two of them, when he heard a most plaintive sound coming from the other end of the barn.

"Baa! Ba-a-a!" Again it came, and Dickum was off at a bound to inquire into this strange cry, closely followed by Laddie.

Yes, there she was, a little brown goat, lying on some nice, soft hay; but her appearance was, as Daddie had said, most pitiful. Laddie's tender heart was immediately touched.

"How do you do?" he began, cordially. "Daddie just told me a stranger was living with us, and I came right out to get acquainted. I hope we are making you comfortable," he added, politely.

"Ah me!" replied the goat, sadly. "Would that I had less comfort, if it would only relieve this awful pain I have inside."

"Pain? O, that is too bad! What kind of a pain is it?" and Laddie seated himself comfortably on the hay.

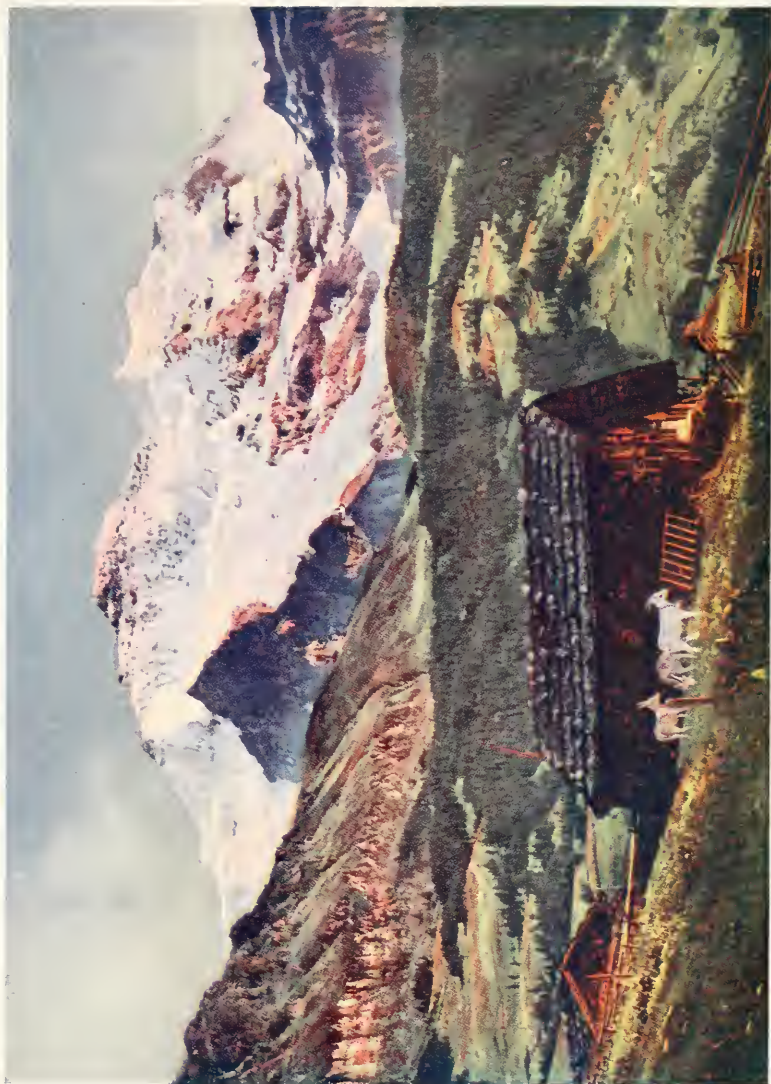
"I have *Heimweh*. I don't know what you call it in America, for I have not lived with you very long; but it is a constant longing to go back to the land where I was born, and to be once more with the rest of my flock on the mountain side. You are all very good to me over here, and give me more to eat and a much better place to live in than I had in my old home. You also spend more time in petting me than Master did.

"Yet never, never do I forget the mountains

with their lovely green slopes, or the eternally snow-capped peaks that seemed to surround my pasture, or the Jungfrau, so high above them all. O, that beautiful Jungfrau! When I was tired of climbing about for food, I used to lie on the hillside and gaze at her rugged beauty, stretched out just before me. She was, to me, a splendid goddess in her bridal robe; the clouds that so often enfolded her, the bridal veil; and her steep, rocky sides, the throne on which she reclined. She would lie there, waiting—waiting—until, at the going down of the sun, she would change her robe of white for one of deepest pink, and then she appeared royal indeed.

“I remember the many waterfalls, some of them more than a thousand feet high—so high, that from a distance they seemed like silver threads. And then, from my feeding ground I could see seven glaciers or rivers of ice, moving slowly, slowly down the sides of the mountains, till at last they melted—sometimes forming beautiful cascades, in their haste to join the stream rushing through the valley below.

“I have *Heimweh* also for the bells; for each goat and cow always wore one strapped around the neck, and they rang musically whenever we moved. They sounded like your church bells,





only far sweeter; and each one had a different tone. Some of these bells were small and some large, but they all harmonized beautifully. And then I long for the flowers, which now are covering those hillsides so thickly, you could gather more than three hundred kinds in a short time. O, Laddie, truly I have *Heimweh*!"

"I know just what you mean," said Laddie, in his sweet, sympathetic voice. "We call it homesickness. I know just how it feels, too, for I had it once *awfully*, when Mother Dear was away. I am *very* sorry for you."

"Thank you, Laddie. I have been told many things about you, and you are just as kind as they said; and then, few understand me as you seem to. When I talk to the other animals, they think I am so silly to want to go back home; for they all declare I am much better off here. And they laugh at my speech, too; but it is hard always to speak correctly, when I have been over here such a short time. I found your language most difficult to learn."

"I think you speak it very nicely," Laddie hastened to assure her; "and I understand you perfectly. I wish I could talk to you in your own language; but you see I have always lived in America, and so can not."

"Yes; and you would find mine just as hard to learn as I found yours. Thankful am I to make myself understood."

"I suppose you could tell me a lot of things I never heard about; for your life must have been very different in your own country from what it is here. Perhaps you have heard I love stories," Laddie suggested, coaxingly. "So won't you tell me a nice one, all about yourself? It will give you a chance to talk about your old home, as well as amuse me. Dickum, lie down and listen! Now we are quite ready."

"Well, I began my life in a little *chalet*—or log hut, as you would call it—which stood far down on one of the lower slopes of a mountain. The winters are very severe with us; and though it was now April, there was snow everywhere, and the summer pastures higher up were buried under several feet of it.

"But our home was quite comfortable, as the back of it had been built right into the steep mountain side, and stones had been piled around the rest of it to keep out as much cold as possible. The roof was covered with rough shingles—not nailed down as your shingles are, but held in place by putting great stones on top of them. There were no windows, as we did not need to

see much, and they would have let in a great deal of cold. There was a little door in front, but in cold weather it was always kept closed.

“Our furniture was very simple. Feeding troughs had been placed against the walls, and every night the floor was covered with leaves, shavings, or fresh twigs from the pine trees for us to sleep on. Hay or straw is, of course, much more comfortable, but Master was far too poor to buy either of them for us.

“Mother and I shared this hut with four other goats, each of whom had a baby; and near us were several other *chalets*, filled by the rest of our flock. When I was hungry, Mother fed me with her milk, just as you have seen the cows feed their babies so many times; and that, and the pure mountain air, made me grow rapidly and become strong. When I was two days old, I could stand up all alone; and the third day I was able to walk around.

“We goats do not like to be cold and shivery; so I huddled up close to Mother, and Mother huddled up close to the others, and thus we kept each other warm. Mother fed me with her milk till I was three weeks old, and then Master came and took me away from her; for he was so poor he needed to sell Mother’s milk for money with

which to buy bread for himself, and I was now old enough to eat something else.

“Master had put me and many other young goats in the very warmest *chalet* of all; and he fed us carefully from the stock of weeds or plants which he had stored up in the roof of our house for us. You may think this was poor eating; but even of this we were never given more than we needed, because food is always very scarce on the mountain side. Master had gathered this fodder the summer before, cutting it all by hand and carrying it a long way on his back to our home; for he could not afford to buy a horse, as you would do in America, and a horse would have found it hard work climbing our hillsides anyway. Only people, cows, and goats lived on the Lauberhorn, which was the name of our mountain.

“So the weeks passed by, and each day I was growing bigger and stronger. The snow outside was beginning to disappear, and now our little door was often left open during the day. Bars were always placed across it to keep us in, but the sun could shine on us warmly, we could get plenty of fresh air, and we began to get acquainted with the mountains we could now see so plainly, and which we soon learned to love dearly.

"One day, when the snow had melted along the trail sufficiently, but the mud had dried up not at all, Master came to the door, and taking down the bars gave us to understand we were to come outside. We all ran out quickly, eager to see what the big world we had as yet gotten only glimpses of, was really like.

"The sun shone brightly, but the air seemed very cold. However, it was good, healthy mountain air, and made me feel at once like doing things; so I started to run down the steep trail as fast as I could, kicking my heels high in sheer joy. Some of the others began to follow me; but Master and a boy helper, wishing us to go *up* the trail, hastened to head us off. Master always carried a whip; and by cracking that threateningly and by much shouting, they at last succeeded in turning us back. Goats found out long ago it was always better to obey man, and we are usually very tractable.

"So we followed the rest of the flock up the trail, nibbling, as we went, the grass that was springing up wherever the snow had disappeared. The old goats went ahead to show us the way, but Master and the boy came behind to see that none strayed. We had no dog to watch us because Master was too poor to feed one. But

they cannot climb as goats can, as Dickum very well knows; so what good would a dog have been on the mountain?

“We could not go very far that day, because much of the mountain was still covered with snow; but we secured some food, and so did not require as much supper as usual. Each day shone the sun always warmer and warmer, melting the snow; and each day went we always higher and higher up the mountain side; until one day, when the snow had completely vanished, Master drove us clear to the top of the Laubhorn. O, it was wonderful—wonderful! The day was a long and happy one. But when the sun was getting low, Master drove us back to our *chalet*; for we were never allowed to sleep on the mountain, but were always kept safely sheltered.

“When we reached home we were each given a handful of oats, and the old goats were milked. After that, the boy spread some sweet pine twigs on the floor for our bed; and then, shutting the door to keep out intruders, left us for the night.

“Master and the boy lived up over the goats, in the top of one of our *chalets*, and they slept on a bed of twigs just like ours; for, as I have tried so hard to make you understand, they were very poor. The boy had never even tasted cake or

candy, of which you are so fond, Laddie; and very, very seldom had they any meat to eat. But they had bread, which came in big loaves with a hard crust; and hot soup, which they liked very much, and which they needed to keep them warm; for it was always cool on the mountain.

"I soon learned to run down the rough mountain side just as fast as you run on the level ground; and I loved to climb over the rocks and up the steep cliffs in search of food. At first, I had to be careful when choosing plants to eat; for the old goats said bad weeds would poison me and make me very sick. Some animals know such things by instinct, but tame goats usually have to learn them. Master always tried to destroy the bad weeds; but the Lauberhorn was such a big place, of course he could not kill them all.

"However, I did not get poisoned; for Master always watched us very closely, and I soon learned to distinguish for myself. It was just a joy to be alive in those days. I liked getting food for myself, and often I would find some nice, green tips on the branches of a tree growing in a very steep place.

"Now I suppose you would laugh if I told you I climbed the tree to get them; but I did something that was, at least, very similar. I would

climb a little higher up the mountain than the tree, which brought me among its branches; then I would put my fore feet high up in the tree, and by stretching my neck I could generally reach them. It was great fun, and they were usually worth the effort.

“But whether I climbed trees, ran down a mountain trail, or simply moved my head, the little bell which I always wore around my neck would jingle merrily, and I miss it very much. I do not believe you really love music in this country, or you would never have taken my bell from me.

“Sometimes I got tired, and then I would lie down, and, chewing my cud, gaze at the wonderful view stretched out before me; and a more beautiful picture than snow-covered mountains and green pastures make, cannot be imagined.

“But the summer is always short on the Lauberhorn; so before I knew it the nice, warm days were over, the cold rains which soon turned to snow began to come, and we could go to the top no more. Gradually the snow crept down nearer and nearer to our *chalet*, and when it became so deep we could no longer go outside, we knew the long winter had begun.

“The months passed slowly, but at last the

dreary time was over. I was doubly happy; for spring had come, and I had a little baby goat. I was very proud of it, and fed it, just as Mother had fed me, until it was old enough to eat something else; and then Master took it away. I know he needed my milk to sell; but I missed my baby very much, and you humans are cruel when you take our children away from us too soon.

“And then summer was with us again, and we were driven daily to the top of the Lauberhorn. There were now fifty goats in our flock, including the babies and two males or bucks, as you call them; and we were a happy and peaceful family.

“Master always climbed the mountain just as we goats do; but most humans find that entirely too hard even to attempt. Every summer came visitors from other lands to our little village, many of whom were Americans; but though they liked to climb the Lauberhorn for the beautiful view, they always went up the trail or road that had been made for them, and which wound back and forth instead of going straight up the mountain. In all dangerous spots rails had been placed to prevent accidents.

“But you cannot learn to know the Lauberhorn in that way. It is only after you have roamed up and down its sides in every direction, explored

every ravine and stream, climbed every projecting rock, and learned the best feeding-places, that you can understand and love it as a goat does.

"And always, when we were driven back to our *chalet* at the close of the long day spent in search of food, were we given a few oats to help out the scanty living obtained on the mountain side. Then, sitting behind me with his legs curled under him, Master would proceed to milk me. Of course we do not give as much milk as a cow, for we are not nearly as large; but a goat gives as much as you could drink at one time, and often more.

"Now the village, with its big hotels, lay down the mountain side just below us; and all mountain-loving people were sure to find their way to it, sooner or later. There were always, as I have said, many Americans in those hotels; and as they are ever curious about new things, they would soon seek us out in order to see our flock milked.

"It seemed a very ordinary thing to me; but those Americans would ask many questions, and appeared to think us a strange kind of animal. As they always gave Master several coins for showing them how we lived, he was very nice to them; and was, of course, much pleased with the money. But I often heard him

laughing with the boy about them; and many times did he say, 'Americans seem to have more money than brains.'

"Now naturally, as we were all one big family, I regarded Master's friends as my friends; and when I saw him talking to any of those foreigners, I would run up and take a place beside him. Then, of course, they would all want to pet me, so I would stand quietly; for I soon learned that meant more coins for Master. They admired my light brown color, which, with the dark brown streaks—one running down the middle of my back, and the other on my belly—and my white horns, legs, and feet, made me very pretty.

"One evening when we returned to our *chalet*, we found a man, lady, and little boy there waiting for us. I knew they were Americans from their clothes, which are always so different from those of other foreigners. Then, too, they always talk through their noses—or so it seems to us—and are very reckless with their money, for they want to buy everything they see.

"The man soon made known his errand. He told Master his little boy was not at all strong, and the doctor had ordered him to the mountains to see what the pure air would do for him, and had insisted he be fed on fresh goats' milk.

And then the man offered Master a big price to drive some of us up to his hotel each day, and milk us there. Of course Master was very much pleased; and when I walked up to the little boy and put my nose up to be patted, they thought I was very cunning.

"*Ach!* That was the beginning of all my trouble; for the boy said at once he wanted milk from me, and if he could not have it, he would not drink any. They never seemed to deny him anything, and always let him have his own way; so of course they told Master to do as the boy desired.

"But that is not the way the children in our country are allowed to do, I assure you; and I certainly think it a very foolish way to bring up a child. I heard Master say he supposed the boy was humored because he was such a sickly little fellow; but even so, I do not believe it was good for him.

"After that I was driven to the hotel every night and morning, and the boy took a great fancy to me, for I was a new toy. And I tried to like him—for Master's sake.

"One day they told Master they did not think I had enough to eat, and if he would give me more oats, they would pay for them, for they wanted to make a nice fat goat out of me. And

so Master gave me an extra handful each time he fed me; but he did not give me a big quantity, because he knew a fat goat could never climb well. He also began to try to keep me real clean, so I would look my best for the Americans.

"Being at the hotel twice a day, we saw quite a little of this family. One night I heard the man ask Master why he did not go to America where he could make money, instead of starving on the Lauberhorn.

"And then they had a long talk. I saw Master was deeply impressed, for all of the Americans who came to our village seemed to be very rich. A long time before, some one had told Master that the streets in America were covered with money, and all one had to do was to pick it up. And now he remembered that too. I saw he was beginning to think of leaving our dear Lauberhorn; and I wondered if he would make sure I had another kind Master, if he should finally decide to go away.

"And now I was often left at the hotel to amuse the little sick boy, instead of being driven up the mountain with the rest of the flock. This did not please me very well, for he was usually rather cross and wilful—though his parents called it temperament. But he had never been

cruel; and so one day when he started to drive me around with a stick which had a string-lash in imitation of Master's, I thought nothing of it.

"Master had told him always to let me go along and nibble at the grass as I pleased, and never to hurry me, for that would spoil my nice milk. And so I started off, with never an anxious thought; but presently the boy grew tired of waiting for me to eat, and told me to go on. I had just found some sweet, juicy grass and I did not see why I should obey him, even if his parents did.

"He commenced to hit me with the lash, which of course I hardly felt; and when he saw I paid no attention, he tried to push me along. But he was not strong enough to move me, or cause me to hurry; so he fell into an awful temper, and hit me hard with the stick. It was a strong stick, and it hurt me.

"Now I had never been hit before, and I looked up in surprise to see what it meant. As one blow had not moved me, he became angrier than ever, and proceeded to give me many—hitting hard and quick. They hurt me cruelly; and as I knew only one thing to do to protect myself, I did that thing. I ran rapidly up the trail. My tormentor was too weak to even

try to chase me; but I was thoroughly frightened, and ran as I had never run before; and as I was too excited to know what I was doing, I soon lost my way.

“I have told you I knew the Lauberhorn well, and so I did; but I had always depended on Master to guide me, and had never tried to find my way about alone. Everything looked so different from what it did when with the flock. I was now doubly frightened; for I did not know where I was, and I believed, if I found my way back, the boy would be there, waiting for me with the stick.

“And so I determined to find Master; though that was a very difficult thing to do, as I soon learned. At last I reached the top of the Lauberhorn, but Master and the flock were not there. Baa-a-a! I called many, many times, but there was never any answer. Only the sound of my own voice came back to me, and it was so weird, it scared me more than ever. Then I listened a long time for the tinkle of the bells, but in vain. And everything up there was so still—deathly still.

“I was now tired and discouraged; so I lay down, and, chewing my cud, looked up at the beautiful Jungfrau. It was growing late, and

she had already put on her pink evening robe, and was, I thought, more lovely than ever. But while I gazed, entranced with her beauty, the pink gradually turned to white—for the sun had long ago disappeared—and it was night. And I was cold—very cold.

“I knew now I must sleep up there on the mountain, so I climbed down a little way to a projecting rock which I remembered had a big hole under it, and into this shelter I gladly crept. Occasionally would I call for Master; for I was shivering with cold, I was awfully lonesome, and not having been milked, I was very uncomfortable. Finally I went to sleep; but I had horrible dreams, from which I kept awaking with a start. I passed a wretched night.

“But at last morning came. When I crawled out, the sun had just reached the top of the Jungfrau, and eagerly I watched it creep down, until, after a long time, it shone fully on the top of the Lauberhorn. Never was the sun so welcome, and soon I became warm enough to move about. I at once began to look for a trail down the mountain, for I wanted to go back to my *chalet*; but as I had not been milked for twenty-four hours, I could not go very fast.

“Before I had gone far, my heart gave a great

bound; for I heard the sound of jodeling. It was not far away, and I knew it was one of our mountain people, and he would be sure to see that I got home safely. It kept coming nearer—nearer—and now I could hear the jingle of bells. My heart beat very fast, for that jodeler might be my dear Master; and those bells, the bells of my flock. And sure enough it *was* Master—driving the flock as he searched carefully for me.

“I ran up to him happily; and after looking me over gently to see I was not hurt, he hastened to milk me. He had brought a pail with him, for he knew I would be suffering. An American would have thrown that milk away. But Master was too poor to throw anything away; so he carried it around with him all day, and took it down to the *chalet* when we went back at night.

“Little did I think that was to be my last day on the dear Lauberhorn. Perhaps some instinct tried to tell me, for never had everything looked so lovely; but I thought it was all due to my happiness in finding Master again. And as that was the only life I knew, how could I even imagine anything different?

“The next morning a new herder came and drove the flock up the mountain; but Master kept me back, as he had frequently done before.

I did not see how he could be so cruel as to give me over to the boy again, and I was much relieved when I heard him say the child was very sick, and was to be taken back to America at once. And I was glad; for I never wanted to see that boy again. But if he was sick, he surely could not play with me; and as I had never been kept back from the flock for any other reason, I could not understand it.

"Before long Master came and let me out. I knew he was dressed rather better than usual, but I did *not* know we were about to start for America. He drove me down the trail, past a village, and on—on through the valley, ever descending, until we reached a large town. I had never seen anything larger than our little village, and the strange noises frightened me.

"We went right through this town till we reached a place called a station. After a while the American drove up in an automobile, and I saw the little boy lying in the lap of a woman who wore a white cap, and his mother was holding his hand. They told Master to take the next train, and they would meet us in Basel.

"I had occasionally seen a train climbing up the mountain side on its way to the Jungfrau, but that was small and went very slowly. I was

terribly frightened when a real train rushed up to us, and I think Master was, too; for neither of us was prepared to see such a big, noisy thing. However, Master and one of the trainmen lifted me into a car, and the train started.

"Master and I stayed in one end of the car, and in the other end was a man very busy with packages and boxes. Every time the train stopped I thought we would get out, but only some of the boxes were taken off, and others put on in their places. I soon began to listen for the two bells that were rung at each station, for those bells made me think of home.

"We rode in that car till almost night. Master never spoke to me once, but seemed very thoughtful and sad. Several times I tried to make him understand I wanted to go back home; but as it always made him look as though he wanted it more than I did, after a time I stopped. The train jolted us terribly; and when at last we reached Basel, we were glad enough to get out. I thought this place worse than the one where we had taken the train, for I found we had left our dear mountains far, far behind.

"Master led me a short distance till we came to a small building; and then, after feeding and milking me, he left me for the night. How I

longed for him to stay with me; but he went off with my milk, and I concluded the boy must be somewhere near. Everything was very strange to me now, for Master had never done anything like this before; and as I had often seen the American give him money, I concluded he, too, must have more money now than brains.

“And why shouldn’t I think so, when I had been given both oats and hay for my supper? I preferred the oats; and I ate so many I could not possibly eat the hay, and so Master had spread it on the floor for my *bed*. But I knew, as he did so, he, too, was thinking how the poor goats on the mountain would have enjoyed what we were wasting, though we would have given them of our abundance gladly.

“In the morning Master came and milked me; and then, after feeding me, took my milk away again as before. We stayed there two days; but as the boy was no better, we went by degrees to the place where a big boat was waiting for us. And there I learned that to reach America, we would have to go over water—more water than I supposed was in the world. And then I thought of our streams and springs which often dried up in summer, and wished I could fill them;

but I learned afterwards this water was very salty, and not at all good to drink.

“And then Master put me on the boat, where I stayed shut up in my place for days. The boat rocked much worse than the train, and how I did long for my old home and simple life. I did not enjoy traveling. Master came to milk me every morning and night, but he often came during the day also; and if he felt as badly as he looked, he must have felt badly indeed. I do not believe he enjoyed traveling either.

“One morning after milking me, I was much astonished to see Master drink the milk himself. He did the same thing at night; and after that he never took my milk away again. I wondered if my milk had made the boy well, so he did not need it any more. I could only guess at what was happening in those days, for I saw no one but Master; and though he seldom spoke to me, he petted me more than he had ever done before. But I felt sick now all the time, for I sadly missed my mountain exercise and the fresh air.

“Finally the boat stopped rocking. Soon I was taken out of the small, stuffy quarters where I had been so long, and once more I saw the bright sunshine and breathed the fresh air. Yet it was not mountain air. I knew that at once.

But your tall buildings were a big surprise to me, and I compared them with my little *chalet*—and wondered.

“We were at last off the boat, where we found the American and his wife waiting for us; but the boy was no longer with them. When the lady saw me, she began to cry; and I wondered if she, too, wished herself back on the Lauberhorn again. I could have cried also, only goats don’t cry.

“Then the American gave Master a roll of bills, and sent a man to put us on a train that would take us to this town; for Master has a son living here. And though he had not seen his son for many years, he knew he was doing well, and thought they could live and work together.

“Master had expected me to live with the Americans; but when he was told I was needed no longer, he thought I would be a pleasant surprise for his son. But I was not; and somehow I felt Master was not wanted either.

“At last it was arranged that Master should stay, but I was to be sold. O, your American money! How I have come to hate it! I wonder if it ever brings anything but misery. Being brought to America was bad enough, without having to lose Master too. And with so much money over here, there ought to be a place

somewhere for one poor little goat and her Master. But no! Master was to stay where he was not wanted, and I was to be sold. My wretchedness was now complete.

"It was not an easy thing to find someone to buy me, for they have little use for goats in this town. But at last Daddie saw me; and when Master told him my story, he decided I would make a nice pet for his little boy. And though I was still sick, he said he thought a few days in the fields would cure me up. But it hasn't. You are all very good to me; but with no mountains—no other goats—no bells—no Master—do you wonder I have *Heimweh*?" and she sadly closed her eyes, as though trying to shut out unpleasant thoughts.

Laddie, choking back a sob, tiptoed silently away—thinking words of sympathy, in this case, far too inadequate.

Every day now, Laddie went to call upon Brownie; but no more stories did he get. In fact, Brownie seemed utterly unconscious of his presence. To all of Laddie's anxious questions, she answered not a word. Her eyes were very sad, and had a far-away look in them—as though they were gazing on the much beloved Laubhorn, Laddie thought.

One morning, Daddie stopped him as he was leaving the porch for his daily visit.

"I want to tell you something about your new friend. Brownie will never have *Heimweh* any more. I am sure you will be glad."

"O, yes, *so* glad! But how did she lose her awful pain, Daddie?"

"Well, you see, she didn't like it here, and couldn't seem to learn to; though I am sure we all did our best. And so she has gone away."

"Gone away? And without saying good-bye? O, Daddie, that was not nice!"

"But, Laddie, we were all asleep; and of course she could not call us."

"I suppose not. But why didn't she wait till morning? And where did she go? O, I hope she went home!"

"Well, I think she wanted to go so badly, she waited for nothing. And yes—Laddie—I believe she has gone home; and that her pain is entirely cured."

"And did the Master come for her?" Laddie asked, softly.

"Y-e-s—I believe that too. The Master did come for her; 'and there shall be no more'—*Heimweh*."

For where's the State beneath the Firmament,
That doth excel the Bees for Government?

DU BARTAS.



Bees work for man, and yet they never bruise
Their Master's flower, but leave it, having done,
As fair as ever and as fit to use;
So both the flower doth stay and honey run.

HERBERT.

THE FAITHFUL ONE

ONE warm summer morning, when Laddie and Dickum were competing in friendly races between the porch and the gate, Mother Dear's voice was heard calling.

"Laddie, come quickly, and see who is here!"

Laddie hastened into the house, wondering who could have arrived without his having seen them. He found Mother Dear in the dining-room arranging some lilies she had just gathered in the big flower-garden; but he could not see anyone else, though he even peeped under the table.

"Perhaps you had better look on the window behind you, Laddie."

The boy turned, and immediately his bright eyes recognized the stranger. "It's a bee, Mother Dear!"

"Yes, a honey-bee; and bees are the most interesting of all insects, as well as the most intelligent."

"O, Mother Dear, tell me about them!"

"No, Laddie; for they have many ways I don't understand at all, and I think you had better let the bee tell his own story. It is sure to be one of the very best you will hear on the whole farm. Go over and talk to him, dear."

"But won't he sting me? He seems very cross."

"O, no! That is only because he is so anxious to get away. I brought him in with these flowers, and he does not like it at all; so he is buzzing around, trying to find a way out."

"Hadn't I better let him go, then?" asked the warm-hearted little fellow.

"Yes, very soon; for of course we would not keep him a prisoner here long. But I want you to study him a little first; for you will never have a better chance, and I am sure he can tell you many wonderful things. You just ask him," and Mother Dear gave him a gentle shove towards the bee as she left the room, closing the door behind her.

Laddie edged up to the window very slowly, for he was still a tiny bit scared.

"Please, Mr. Bee, won't you tell me a story? Something about yourself, I mean?"

The bee, who had been searching frantically all this time for an opening to the outdoor world,

stopped a moment in the midst of much buzzing and bumping against the window pane to reply crossly: "I should think you could see for yourself the fix I am in. This is no time for stories; and I simply *must* get out, for I have all my work to do. Already I have lost five good minutes; and how I shall ever be able to make them up, I don't see."

"O, I am sorry! and just as soon as you tell me a little about yourself, I will let you go. But please answer a few questions first."

But the bee was not yet convinced a way out could not be found without stopping for stories, and so flew about more wildly than ever. Laddie stood watching, full of curiosity.

"Doesn't it hurt you awfully to bump yourself so hard against the glass? I shouldn't think you would do it; for, you know, you can't get out that way."

"Can't get out that way? I know better than that. We bees know that when we face the light, that is *always* the way out. There is something funny about this though. It looks to me like the work of the humans."

"Yes; and while it is made so you can easily see through it, it is far too strong for you to

fly through. So you simply can't get out unless I help you; and I want that story first."

"But I don't feel like telling stories, or even answering questions, when I think of all my work. The others will be accusing me of laziness; and they never permit any shirking, I can tell you."

"Perhaps you do not know who I am," said Laddie, in his pretty, friendly way. "I am only a little city boy who has come to Happy Days to live, and I want to get acquainted with everything on our farm. I have made a great many friends here already, but I never had a chance to meet any of you bee-people before. Indeed, I never saw a bee in my life till I came to Happy Days; and I would very much like to know you, so we could be friends too. Please be good and tell me, Mr. Bee."

The bee paused as though thinking; and then, bumping slowly down to the window-sill, studied Laddie intently for a moment. Evidently impressed with the boy's friendly manner, and also convinced a way out could not be found alone, the stranger decided to make a treaty.

"Do you promise to let me go as soon as I have answered your questions?" the bee inquired.

"I solemnly promise."

"And you will not try to catch me, or bring me back?"

"I cross my heart."

The bee was apparently satisfied. "Well then I will agree. But first, I want to ask *you* a question. Why do you always call me Mr. Bee?"

"Why," answered Laddie, "I meant only to be polite. Don't you like the name?"

"No, I don't; for it is not my name. I have nothing in common with the males of my family, I can tell you. They are all a lazy, dirty, helpless set; and I, for one, don't approve of them. But we must tolerate them"—the words came slowly—"for a little longer."

"Well, won't you tell me what your name is, then, so I can address you properly? It is awful to talk to a person, I think, without knowing his name. Now, *my* name is Laddie; and I like it very much, for it is so pretty."

"And mine is Apis Mellifica, and I am just as proud of it as you are of yours. Perhaps I have more cause to be; for I can trace my ancestry back thousands and thousands of years, and as a family we have always done our duty. But if my name is too hard, you may call me Miss Apis;

for I have never married, and never shall. I am much too busy making honey for anything else."

"O, honey!" and Laddie smacked his lips. "I love it; don't you?"

The bee was greatly astonished. "Why, I don't eat honey. I can't afford to."

"You don't eat honey? Well, what is it you get out of the flowers then?"

"Flower-juice."

"Well, isn't that honey?" asked the boy.

"O, no! We call that nectar; and it makes splendid food."

"But how do you get it?"

"I alight on a flower, and crawl into it as far as possible. Some flowers are very hard to enter, and it may take us several minutes to decide how; but we usually find a way."

"But what do you do in winter when there are no flowers?"

"O, we don't make honey then! But we get busy the very first thing in the spring, long before you imagine the flowers have even thought of blooming. Our scouts are sent out every morning before sunrise, searching for them; and when they come back with their reports, we are all much interested. They tell us when the nut trees are in bloom, when the fields are white

with the clover that makes such good honey, when the red raspberries we so dearly love are flowering, and when the nasturtiums and honeysuckles are ready for us. Then we go out in delegations—perhaps five thousand to the clover field, three thousand to the flower-garden, and the rest to other places. And so we are kept busy every day, until the flowers are all gone.”

“But you haven’t told me how you get the flower-juice?”

“Why, I get it with my tongue, of course. I run it down into the very center of the flower, like this,” and suddenly a long, shining brown tongue appeared.

Laddie looked at it in amazement. “My, but that’s a long one!” he observed. “How do you get it all in your mouth?”

“I fold it up, of course,” answered Miss Apis; as though a tongue that could be folded was a very ordinary thing.

“And do you eat that—nectar, did you call it?—all day?”

“O, no! Two or three flowers give me all I need for myself. I gather the rest to take home.”

“Take home? Why, what do you take it in? A market basket, I suppose,” teased Laddie.

“Yes; you would probably call it that. In

fact, I have three kinds of baskets; but you would have to look very closely to find any of them. Indeed, I don't think you could see my honey-basket at all, for that is inside of me; but I will tell you about it. When I gather the nectar, I swallow it; then it passes right into my basket or honey-sac, and that is the way I take it home. I had been sent to the garden flowers to-day, and was hard at work in the very bottom of a lily, when Mother Dear brought me into this place. In another instant I should have been gone, for my basket was full."

"And have you got it with you now? I don't think anyone would notice you were carrying anything."

"No, probably not; for you see my basket holds only a very small drop. That means, of course, making a great many trips; and when the work lies three or four miles away from home, as it sometimes does, just think of the traveling that has to be done in order to gather enough honey to fill our hive. Sometimes it makes me wish I had a larger basket."

"Where is your honey-basket?" asked Laddie, curiously.

"It's in the very center of my body. Perhaps you would like to see where I mean?" and the

bee obligingly flew up on the window-glass just above the boy's head.

"Oh!" Laddie cried; "I see a little round thing right in the middle of you. I wonder if that is it?"

"Yes, that is my honey-basket; but I did not think you could see it. You couldn't, if it wasn't full of honey."

"But after you swallow it, how do you ever get it out again? Does it make you so sick you have to, well—spit it up? Candy made me sick once, when I ate too much."

"No, it doesn't make me sick at all. I have a nice way of emptying it, for I am very wonderfully made. But before I can do that, I have to make the nectar pure; for a little pollen always gets into it, in spite of me. Now that is not nice to mix with the honey; so I pass it from my honey-sac into my real stomach, when, of course, some of the honey goes through with it. Then, as I must not lose any, I have to get that back into my honey-sac again; and how do you suppose I do it, without letting the pollen through also?"

"I am sure I don't know."

"Why, that is very simple. I have a sieve made of hairs, which lets the honey through to

the honey-basket, but keeps all the pollen back." Here the bee took a spin across the room to another window she had just spied; but after bumping up and down it, she became convinced that was not the way out either, and soon returned to her original place on the window-sill.

Laddie was waiting for her. "And what do you do next?" he asked, eagerly.

"Then when I reach the hive, I use a muscle which squeezes this strained or purified honey out of my body into the special honey-cell selected for it. It takes many drops of honey to fill a cell, and all of those drops must be made of the same nectar, for we do not like to mix the honey of one kind of flower with that of another."

"My, but you are busy people!"

"Indeed we are, for you see all the real work of the hive falls upon us females. In fact, the humans call us 'workers,' because we are so busy. We have no Sundays, vacations, or playtimes like you, for we always have too much work to do."

"And do you all do the same thing?"

"No; we all do an equal amount of work, but the kind may be changed from day to day. For instance, yesterday I was sent to gather pollen, which was needed for our new babies."

"Oh! do you have babies in the hive?"

"Yes, of course; we have thousands of babies, and they make a lot of extra work for us. But then, you see, we simply must have them, in order to keep the hive going."

"But what is pollen?"

"That is another thing we gather from the flowers. You see, the plants also want babies—plant-babies; but, in order to get them, they must exchange pollen with other plants. At first they were puzzled to find a way to do it; for they cannot move around and leave it as they please, you know. And so they asked the wind to help them. But he did not always carry the pollen in the right direction, or leave it where they wanted him to, and a lot of it was wasted; and, though he did his best, the plants were not at all satisfied. But one day they thought of a splendid way; for they began to make flowers—each plant carrying out its own idea of perfect beauty. But that was not enough; so they filled each flower with the sweetest nectar they could make, putting it deep in the center of the blossom; and then waited to see what would happen. It was not long before the bees found them out, and whenever one dove into the heart of a flower, she was sure to get covered with the

pollen. Then she would go to another flower of the same kind, where some of the pollen would get knocked off, and some more rubbed on; and it was all done so well, that ever since bees have been used to carry out the plants' desires. Never think flowers grow sweet and beautiful just to please you humans, for they do it only to attract insects to them. They gladly make the nectar for us, only asking that as we come we bring them a little pollen, and as we go we take some of theirs to leave with other flowers."

"I think that is a splendid story. And it is very kind of you to do it for them, when you are so busy."

"O, I am very glad to do that in return for the nectar; but in any case I could hardly help myself, as the little grains get into my rough hairs, and I cannot always be brushing them off."

"When you go to gather pollen, do you put that in a basket too?"

"Yes, in my pollen-baskets. I fill them from the flowers with my claws, which are on the ends of my legs, and which I use much the same as you do your hands. Then as my back always gets covered with pollen, I brush that off with



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the hairs on my legs, which are as good as any brush you have."

"But please tell me where you carry these baskets. Are they inside of you too?"

"Of course not. One basket is quite enough to carry inside. These are on my legs. You see I have six legs, and on my hind legs are my pollen-baskets—one on each leg. It is a very convenient way to carry them, I assure you; and as they grow there, I always have them with me when I want them, and when they are full they hold a good deal."

"And how do you empty your pollen-baskets when you get home?"

"Why, I kick the pollen out; then another worker puts it into a cell, and packs it down hard with her head."

"Who else lives in your hive? I know you have a queen. That must be fine."

"No, you are mistaken; we have no queen. Only the silly humans who don't know us well call her that. She is not our queen, but our mother—the mother of the city."

"Oh! do you call your hive a city? Why do you do that?"

"Why do you call your big places cities? We have about fifty thousand bees in our hive.

Quite a good-sized city, we think. We have all kinds of workers to care for our city, the same as you do. There are policemen, who guard our entrance, to keep out everything that does not belong there; maids, who keep the hives perfectly clean—for we are a very cleanly people; and engineers, who keep the place heated and ventilated as we may require. You see we need lots of fresh air—much more than you do—and as little gets into such a crowded place of itself, the engineers keep the hive very comfortable by fanning the cool outside air in with their wings, and so supply us with all we desire. Then we have architects and builders, who plan and build our wax walls, and give to our wax cells the pretty shape you humans so much admire; and here is where our third kind of basket comes in handy.”

“O, I was afraid you would forget about that!”

“No, I couldn’t afford to forget anything so important to me as my wax-baskets. You see we must have a large quantity of wax, in order to make all the cells we need; and the making of this wax is the hardest task we have to perform. We have to hang suspended by our claws from the ceiling or from each other for several hours; and then our wax-pockets or baskets,

of which we have eight on the under side of our bodies, are filled with wax. I cannot tell you how that is done, because it is too complicated; but it is very important work, for without this wax we could make no store-houses or cradles. Then we have laborers who furnish us with propolis, which is also important."

"What is propolis? I have no idea."

"I suppose you would call it glue; and we use it to fill up cracks, to fasten the comb to the hive, and also to narrow our entrance whenever anything tries to get into our city that would injure it. But in case something should happen to get in, we would sting it to death; and if it were too large to be carried out, we would cover the body with propolis—thus sealing it up tight, and keeping the hive pure. So you see propolis is quite essential too."

"I think it is all very wonderful," Laddie assured her, admiringly.

"O, I haven't told you half of the wonderful things yet! for we have nurses for the babies, care-takers for the eggs, attendants for our mother, and many other kinds of workers. So you see honey-making is not the only thing we have to do. We are all busy, useful citizens. But we have some—nearly one thousand—

living with us, who never help us at all. They are the males of our family, and you humans call them drones. They are so lazy, they have to be waited upon constantly, and are a perfect nuisance. Why, it takes five or six workers to care for just one drone. *They* eat honey if we workers do not; and when they help themselves, they get everything all dirty. But I suppose we could prevent that if we were willing to feed them, and that would suit the drones better yet."

"But why don't you make them go to the flowers for food, the same as you workers do?"

"O, they are perfectly helpless creatures! Why, they couldn't gather nectar for themselves, for they have no nice long tongue. But then that is no hardship for them; for they much prefer honey to nectar, even if it does make the rest of us work all the harder. And as they haven't got a single basket, you see they can't work at all. They are handsome fellows; but as for me, I had far rather have my brushes, baskets, and long tongue. I do wish, though, I had as many eyes as they have; for I have only thirteen thousand."

"Thirteen thousand? Why, what do you do with so many? I have only two, and I am satisfied; for it is hard enough to get them open

in the morning. If I had as many as you, I should never be able to wake up."

"Yes, I suppose two eyes are enough for a boy; but bees need lots of eyes. Why, if instead of thirteen thousand I could have twenty-six thousand like the drone, think how much quicker and better I could see the flowers. But I wouldn't change places with him for the world—not even for the sake of more eyes."

"But if they can't work, what do they do with themselves?"

"They sleep most of the time, and never wake up till the sun is many hours high. Think of it! Then, after gorging themselves with honey, they fly away from the hive for two or three hours—for they have nice strong wings. Often we find them asleep in the flowers, far away from home. Then back they come to eat and sleep again. O, what a life!" and she gave an angry buzz. "They are all alike. They always select the warmest corners, and are even too helpless to brush themselves. Whenever they leave the hive they knock over every one who gets in their way, they are so clumsy and boisterous. But if they knew what *I* know, they would not hold their heads so high. But there! that's enough about them. Perhaps, Laddie, you begin to

understand what it means to be 'as busy as a bee'?"

"Yes, and you make me feel very much ashamed. You must think I am pretty lazy, too, for though I try to help a little on the farm, I am afraid it doesn't amount to very much. But I do love to play; and I especially love stories."

"So I see," observed the bee, dryly. "But now I think I have told you quite enough, and I would be glad to go back to my work."

"Oh! please stop long enough to tell me about the queen—I mean your mother. She does not work at all, I suppose?"

"Mother not work? Why, she is the busiest one of us all. It is true she does nothing but lay the eggs; but when you consider she sometimes lays three thousand in a day, you will see she has no time for stories," and Miss Apis shook her head reprovably. "Mother often lays one hundred thousand eggs in a season. But perhaps you don't understand such big figures?"

"I only know it means a great many," Laddie replied. "Does she put them all in one nest, like the hen?"

"No, indeed! There is a cell or cradle made for each egg. The architects and builders do

that work. When a cell is ready, Mother always inspects it, and if it is all right, she lays an egg in it. Then she hurries on to the next one to lay another; and she keeps this up, day after day, until we have as many eggs as we need for the hive."

"But who keeps the eggs warm till they are hatched then? The Old Lady told me that was a very important thing to do."

"It is; and we have special caretakers appointed to do that work. They hover over the open ends of the cells, and by breathing deeply, they make heat, which keeps the eggs nice and warm. But this, too, is very tiring work. A bee can keep it up only a few minutes at a time, and then she must be relieved by another. An egg is hatched in about three days; only it is not a real bee that comes out, but something that looks like a small worm, and so tiny you could hardly see it."

"I understand. What next?"

"Then, of course, it must be fed; so the nurses come and pour bee-milk into the cell, until the little worm or larva is actually bathing in it. Some of this the larva drinks, and some it absorbs through the skin. When the milk is gone, it is given more; and its food is so nourishing

it grows very fast. If this larva is destined to become a mother—and that was decided when the egg was laid—the nurses will continue to feed it on bee-milk. You see a mother needs to be very strong, for her task of laying eggs is most arduous; and so from the start she is given special attention. The egg she comes from is always placed in a much larger cell than the others, where she can have plenty of room to grow. And all the bee-milk she can eat, and constant loving care, will be hers as long as she lives.”

“But I thought you said you were all given bee-milk?”

“And so we are, at first; but after two or three days a worker’s food is changed to bee-bread, which is made out of pollen and honey. I did not like bee-bread as well as bee-milk; however I had no choice, and soon became used to it. But there again the drones have the best of it, for they are fed on bee-milk long enough to make them big, strong fellows.”

“That doesn’t seem fair, when the rest of you do all the work. But tell me how the larva turns into a bee.”

“It does nothing but eat and grow until it becomes nearly as large as the cell. Then it

begins to get sleepy, and propolis, or bee-glue, is put over the cell opening—taking care, however, to allow plenty of air to get in—and it goes to sleep for a few days. A worker egg becomes a bee in twenty-one days, a drone egg in twenty-four days, but a mother egg becomes a full-fledged bee in only sixteen days.”

“And how does the baby get out? Does it break its cradle open like the chicken?”

“Yes; just about like that. It cuts a hole in the cover of the cell and crawls out; and then it is no longer a worm, but a real bee—ready for its life-work.”

“But surely you don’t go to work at once? When you are little you have things to play with—and stories, too, don’t you?”

“O, Laddie! Laddie! Haven’t I told you we *never* have time to play? No, not even a mother ever wastes time in that way; for from the first she realizes how much depends upon her. Let me tell you about the new mother we have in our city. My own mother moved out last week with many of the workers and drones. They went only to the next hive, to be sure; but our hive was full of honey, and a new mother was about to come out of her cell. She would, of course, demand at once to be hive-mother herself, as

she had a perfect right to do. If the real mother had stayed, there would have been a battle between them; and as no one ever interferes between 'queens' as you call them, one would finally have stung the other to death. But as conditions were right in the hive, with lots of eggs ready to become bees, Mother took most of the workers and drones and went away, leaving everything else for the new mother. They did take a little honey with them; but only enough to last four or five days, until they could get to making some in their new home."

"But didn't you go with your mother too?"

"No; for there were so many eggs and babies in the hive, some of the older ones had to stay to look after them, and I was one of those left behind. So now we have a new mother—though she is really our sister."

"I shouldn't think you would like that. I know I would always want my own mother, and no one else."

"Yes, of course; if you thought only of yourself. We bees *never* do that, but always consider what is best for the hive."

"And did you have to work hard as soon as you were born—I mean came out of the cell?"

"Naturally; for the work is always waiting

for us. We never seem to catch up with it. While I was young I was given work feeding babies, making cells, and doing other inside work; but as soon as I was old enough, I was sent outside to gather nectar. That was only a week ago. But I find there are so many flowers we cannot possibly use them all, work as hard as we will. It hurts a bee to see the flowers go by when their nectar has not been gathered. It makes her feel she must have been very idle to let such a thing happen. And so we are kept working like mad trying to catch up with the flowers. But we have a bright moon now, and it is easy to work on moonlight nights."

"But if your hive is full of honey now, why don't you take a rest?"

"It *was* full—so full I wondered where we could put any more. But when Mother and the others left, they made so much noise about it the farmer heard them. He knew what it meant, and so he came and took most of the honey away. Very likely you have been eating some of it lately?"

"Yes," admitted Laddie, turning very red; "but you see I didn't know how hard you had to work to make it."

"O, I don't mind! I think we were all glad

the farmer took it, for we would work just as hard anyway, and now we have plenty of room once more for our new honey. Remember, it is a bee's nature to work; and she would not rest, even if she could. Come, now I really must be going."

"Won't you please say we are friends, before you go? I hope I have not been unkind in keeping you here?"

"Well, I am sure I don't know what the others will say about it. I know you did not mean to be unkind, and I like your gentle voice. I do hope I have made you understand us better, for we are called very interesting people."

"I should say so. Why, I never heard anything like it before. Do you mind if I watch you sometimes, and try to see how you really do these wonderful things? Or would some of you try to sting me?"

"No, indeed! We would never sting you unless you tried to harm us, or made us think you meant to. But do not make quick motions, for we do not understand them and they frighten us. We have better uses for our stings than to hurt little boys like you; for we have to put a drop of formic acid which comes from the sting into every cell of honey, to keep it from spoiling.

If I should sting you, I could never do that work again, or any other; for when I ran my sting into you, I should probably have to leave it there. You would be pretty sure to try to brush me off, and that would tear the sting from my body, and I should not live long. So, you see, it even pays a bee to be good."

"I am so glad you told me all this, for now I will be careful not to frighten any of you; and I would never think of hurting anything. Please tell the others so. I suppose it is useless to ask you to come again?"

"Yes, but I think you are a dear little boy; and to prove it, I will tell you a secret before I go. Do you love secrets as well as stories?"

"Oh! don't I? You just try me!" And the boy's eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"Well, it is about those drones. You see, day before yesterday our new mother made her marriage flight. She flew high up into the air, followed by many drones, one of which she took for her mate. She had to do this before she could lay eggs that would later become workers or hive-mothers. Now she will never leave the hive again, unless it is to move to another home. This morning she began laying eggs; and as we will soon have the hive filled with bee-babies

again, there is plenty of work ahead for us, you see."

"And now there will be a father in the hive too. Tell me something about him."

"O, no! we never have a father there. You see, he is never able to survive the marriage flight, and the mother always comes back alone. But now the hundreds of drones we are supporting are no longer necessary for the welfare of the hive, and they have long taxed our patience to the utmost; so—and this is the secret—we are planning to put them to death."

"Oh, but don't you think that is very cruel?"

"No, I do *not*. They have been living like—well—kings all their lives, and we submitted until one should be selected as the mate for the new mother; but now they have served their turn, and *they must go*."

Laddie shuddered at the familiar words. "But how will you do it? Perhaps they will resist you."

"But they can't. You remember I told you how helpless they are. The time has not been quite decided yet, but we are considering it; and in a few days the order will be given. Then we will fall upon those useless fellows, and sting them to death; for their bodies are so soft, we

can do that without harm to ourselves. It will be a happy day for the hive when they are gone; but it will not make much difference to me after all, for I shall not be there long to enjoy it."

"Why, what do you mean? Are you going away?"

"Yes, and I am going soon. In another week or two I shall be gone."

"But when are you coming back?"

"I shall never come back; for the life of a worker is a very short one. She works so hard, she rarely lives beyond five or six weeks. You can see my wings are not pretty any more, and my body is all scarred. We really work ourselves to death; for by taking life easier, we might live nearly a year. But I shall go on, doing my work faithfully up to the very last; and then——"

"And then?" Laddie repeated, breathlessly.

"I do not know, of course; but I like to believe I will go to a lovely garden, all filled with the beautiful flowers I love so well, and with lots of sunshine, and that I will always remain there in peace and quiet. That would give the most happiness of anything to a tired bee, I think; and O, I am getting tired—very tired! And so, Laddie, this is good-bye in more ways than one,

for we will probably not see each other again; but remember, boy, and be gentle with the bees—for my sake.”

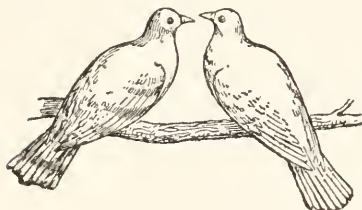
Laddie's eyes were filled with tears. “Dear Miss Apis, I will remember,” he promised solemnly. “And see,” slowly opening the window, “here is the way out. Thank you very much for your splendid story. And now,” choking back the big sob in his throat, “good-bye! Good-bye, Faithful One!”

But Miss Apis was already flying swiftly homeward.

The foolish fears of what might happen.—

I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay,
Among the husking of the corn
Where drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born,—
Out in the fields with God.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.



The birds around me hopp'd and play'd,
Their thoughts I cannot measure—
But the least motion which they made
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

WORDSWORTH.

WHITE LOVE

LADDIE kicked the water, trying to make it flow faster; but the stream went on its way. just as usual. How the boy did love this brook! Soon after his arrival in the spring, he had come here to listen to its voice. Daddie had told him it was a brook "which never talks, but always sings," and Laddie was curious to see how that could possibly be true. But Daddie knew. Yes, indeed! It *did* sing—and it never sang the same song twice.

From the first these songs had a strange fascination for the lad, and he was delighted when he was given permission to play here as much as he pleased; for the water was never deep in summer, and no harm could possibly come to him. So each day some of his time was spent playing in the brook. Dickum always insisted that *his* part was to stay on the bank and guard his master's shoes and stockings; for he did not love the water at all, and could never be persuaded to go any nearer. He hated baths—either

complete or partial; and he had to undergo too many from necessity ever to take them for mere pleasure.

But to Laddie, the fun of wading and splashing around in the brook was ever new and exciting. And those stones, projecting high and dry out of the water, had long ago become islands and strange countries, waiting to be discovered. And then the boy became Columbus, Hudson, De Soto, and Robinson Crusoe in turn; and the brook, which always seemed to enjoy the fun, too, would help him play his part as well as possible.

But when the country had been discovered, or his play finished, before going off to other things, Laddie would always throw himself down beside the brook, and listen for the song. And as the boy listened and dreamed, who can say how much he was to owe in future years to these same songs in the development of his character; for he heard songs of courage, songs of patience, songs of self-sacrifice and heroism—songs of tenderness and love. All of these had certainly played a big part in his life this summer.

And now, his adventures finished for the day, he climbed out. Dickum lay waiting for him on the bank; so Laddie curled down beside him,



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and listened for the song. What would it be about to-day, he wondered. Ah, yes! Now he could hear it! He listened silently for a long time. And now he believed it was beginning all over again.

But this time it was a rustling of wings through the air he heard; and then a voice spoke to him out of the tree overhead.

"Hello, Laddie! The Giant said I would find you here."

The boy sat up at the sound of his name, and soon spied a pigeon on the branch above him.

"O, hello, Questions! Glad to see you."

"I thought you would be," and he flew down to the bridge-rail, which he much preferred to the limb of a tree. "What are you doing?"

"O, just lying here, resting."

"*And* listening. Now weren't you?"

"Yes, I was. But how did you know?"

"Well, The Giant told me first; and then I saw you. I like those songs myself."

"Yes, and it was a very beautiful one to-day."

"I know. I heard it. What song would you call it?"

The boy hesitated an instant. "I'm not quite sure, but I think it was something about love. I know it made me think of Mother Dear and Daddie."

"Yes. It made me think of my dear ones too."

"O, I know who you mean, Questions! You mean Snow White."

"Yes, I mean Snow White—only I call her White Love."

"And you were going to tell me some time how you came here and found her, you know. I should think this would be a good time. Have you anything else to do now?" he inquired, politely.

"No, and I have been waiting all summer for you to ask me for the rest of that story. I thought you must have forgotten it."

"O, no, I hadn't! but I always seemed to be so busy. Still, I have been out to the pen several times to find you, but you weren't there—except at feeding-time."

"Probably I was working. It has been a busy time for me as well as for you, Laddie; and O, *such* a happy one!"

"Do tell me about it, Questions. Begin, please, right where you left off before. You had just lost your home in the school-house, you remember, and had to find a new one."

"Yes, and up to this time my life had been full of nothing but trouble. Here I was, a full-

grown pigeon with no mate yet, and not even a home. I think it was only my love of adventure that kept me from giving up. But better times were just ahead. When I left that school-house, I flew a long distance until I came to another town; but instead of stopping at any of the human-buildings, I flew towards the woods just beyond. Before I quite reached the woods, however, I saw a big tree. He was the largest tree I had ever seen; and as I wanted to rest a moment I alighted on one of his branches, where I felt safe.

“The tree stood on the edge of a farm, not very far from a human-house. But it was not the human-house that attracted my attention, but a pigeon-house. It was built like a shed, and opened into a pen completely enclosed by wire. There was a large door in one side for the humans, and a little door up at the top, through which I could see pigeons flying in and out. I could also see some roosts, and knew there must be many more in the house, as well as boxes to nest in. There was even a little stoop built just outside the pigeons’ door, where one could stop for a moment before entering the pen; and it all seemed very desirable to me. But I knew things were not always what they seemed,

and I resolved to be extremely cautious. There might be a man with a gun here, too; and because he kept some pigeons did not mean he might be willing to keep me also. And I did so want to stay.

"Suddenly a voice near me spoke, and it was a very friendly voice indeed. 'What is your name?' It was the big tree himself inquiring.

"'Questions,' I answered, wonderingly; for no tree had ever spoken to me before.

"'That sounds as though you liked to know things,' he replied; and all his leaves shook with laughter. 'I am called The Giant, and I am everyone's friend. So what can I do for you? Have you come here to live with us?'

"'How I wish I could!' I answered. 'Do you think I would be allowed? And does the man here own a gun?' for I had not forgotten my former experience.

"'Bless your heart, no!' he assured me, warmly. 'We have no use for a gun on our farm,' and I wondered if he thought he owned the place. 'And as for your staying—why, Laddie is crazy over pigeons, and a new one will delight his little heart.'

"'And who is Laddie?' I asked, with much interest.

"But he only laughed. 'You will soon meet him. And now I advise you to fly down there and get acquainted with the other birds. And remember, Questions, you have nothing to fear.'

"I flew away very happy, for my mind was now set at rest. I alighted on the roof of the chicken-house, and watched the pigeons below me; for I wanted to learn a little about them before I went down where they were. A beautiful white female was being annoyed by the overtures of an ugly-blue old male. His color alone proved he was not of aristocratic origin. But she was young, flew gracefully, and I think would have attracted any bird's attention. I admired her very much. 'Some day' I assured myself, 'I will have a mate just like her,' for I naturally supposed such a beautiful bird was already mated.

"The male was walking around her, brushing his tail on the ground, cooing and bowing low to compel her admiration. 'Wah-wah-hoo! I love you!' he cooed over and over again. She would not listen, and soon flew to the top of the pigeon-house to be rid of him. He followed her closely, still cooing tenderly, and always bowing low to emphasize his pleading. Then she flew over to

the top of the chicken-house where I was; but still he followed.

"Now that very morning when I stopped at a nice place to drink, I had seen myself reflected in the water. Of course I had often seen myself before, but this time I looked different; for now all my baby-feathers were gone, and I wore a grown-up coat of pure black, with neck feathers that scintillated green in the sun. I knew I, too, was beautiful; and remembering this, I walked boldly over to her.

"I stood up very straight in order to make a pleasing impression, and I must have done so; for after a moment she asked me to protect her from her pursuer. I bowed to her, cooing my desire to serve; then turning to him said, 'Wah-wah-hah,' meaning he must leave. I repeated this many times, turning in a half circle back and forth as I did so. I explained to him this ridgepole was now my property, as I had taken possession some time before he arrived; and as it was not pigeon etiquette for him to trespass, if he did not go quickly, I should be compelled to use force. As for the lady, I should of course be pleased to have her remain as long as she would.

"He looked me over well, and then cooed back a challenge to fight. I walked up and slapped

him as hard as I could with my right wing. He slapped back. I struck at him with my bill, but was not near enough to hit him. He drew closer, and struck back at me with his bill; but this time I succeeded in giving him a hard blow on the head with my wing. He retreated a few steps, and I quickly followed up my advantage. He made another dive at me, and tried to grab my neck feathers with his bill; but I drove him back again with my wing. Then he landed three hard blows in quick succession on my head, and they hurt terribly.

"But I would not give up the fight, for the lady was waiting to see which would win. Besides I noticed the old fellow's breath was coming hard now, as though his fighting days were nearly over. So taking courage, I quickly grabbed his neck feathers in my bill, and tried to force him off the roof. We both strained several seconds. But I was the stronger, and slowly he was pushed off the ridgepole, and when I let go, he slid down the roof a little way; but he had had enough, so spreading his wings, he flew back to the pen. I had won my first real fight, and of course I felt proud.

"I turned to the lady. 'Well, I think you are rid of him now,' I cooed, bowing low again.

"She thanked me warmly, and I thought she was the loveliest pigeon I had ever seen, in her pure white dress—much lovelier even than Mother.

"'Bluey has bothered me a great deal,' she said, 'and I was getting very tired of it.'

"'Won't you tell me something about this place? How many birds live here?'

"'There are thirty-two of us, and we are all very happy. A little boy called Laddie always feeds us, and sometimes he catches us to stroke our feathers—for he loves us dearly. But we can always keep out of his way when we try.'

"'And are you not afraid?' For I had been told never, never to let a human touch me.

"'At first we were very much frightened, and it made our hearts beat fast when we were caught. But we have learned better now; for Laddie himself told us nothing on our place would ever be hurt.' I noticed the same proud tone of possession The Giant had used. 'Everybody loves us here,' she continued, 'and often Master comes with a beautiful, kind lady, called Mother Dear, to watch us. They seem to understand us; for they never move quickly to frighten us, and always talk to us in loving tones. And so we pigeons think we have the best kind of a place to live in.'

“I thought so too. ‘And now tell me about yourself,’ I begged. ‘Why does this old male annoy you so?’

“‘O,’ she laughed, ‘I am only three months out of the nest, and he wants to marry me! But he is too old and his color is too common to suit me; and he has already had one wife. I am the only unmated female here, and he has made my life miserable by his constant pleading.’

“Quickly I saw my opportunity. ‘Well, I have driven him away for to-day, but you can be safe from further annoyance only by taking me for a mate. My name is Questions; and I, too, am young and anxious to begin life. Weeks ago I left the place where I was born, and have flown a long distance and risked my life many times for the sake of finding a home like this one. Wah-wah-hoo! Wah-wah-hoo! I love you! I love you!’ I cooed over and over, in my sweetest tone.

“But she was not so easily won. She flew to the ground, and now I turned pursuer. I felt she was not yet fully assured of my love, for she could not know how beautiful she was. So while she walked along picking up stray bits of food, I followed closely after.

“‘Wah-wah-hoo! Wah-wah-hoo!’ I urged.

Suddenly she stopped; and when I saw I was making an impression, I gave the final assurance of my love. 'Wah-wah-' and with head bent low and tail sweeping the ground, I ran up to her as I cooed '-hoo!' I repeated this performance several times, and each time she seemed better pleased. 'Wah-wah-wawoo? Will you be my mate?' I finally cooed, stopping close beside her. To my great joy she turned her cheek to me and permitted me to kiss her, which I did many times. And I knew now I had won a mate as well as a home.

"Suddenly she spoke. 'There is Laddie with our supper. Come on, and don't be afraid,' and she flew up through the little door, alighting at Laddie's feet, with me close beside her. Mother Dear was there also. I disliked being so close to the humans, but it seemed as though my mate was more anxious for them to see me, than she was to get a nice supper. I did not understand the feminine instinct as well then as I do now. But I kept my place by her side, even when it seemed to me dangerous, for I was now her acknowledged protector.

"'O, see, Mother Dear!' cried the boy; 'I believe Snow White has found a mate.'

"'Yes,' said Mother Dear; 'and a very beauti-

ful one too. And now they will be choosing a house to build their nest in. You must watch closely, Laddie, to see just how they do things.'

"And so I knew I was welcome. It certainly had been an eventful day, and had ended very happily. We finished our supper and then went out to fly in circles around the human-house a few times, before selecting a roost. My mate told me there were many roosts; but some of the males claimed several when they really needed only one, and I might have to fight, especially if I wished a good one.

"She also told me an old fellow called Speckie claimed the stoop in front of the little door. Of course no one paid attention to his claim; so, whenever possible, he pulled out a feather from each bird as it rushed by him, and let it go at that. He also owned seven of the highest and best roosts, as well as six different houses—three of which he had never used. I foresaw trouble ahead, but I resolved it should be Speckie's trouble and not mine. So boldly I approached the gate; but Speckie had not returned from his supper yet, and we flew safely in.

"'Now, my White Love, tell me which roost you prefer, and I will get it for you,' I promised rashly.

"She showed me a nice long one 'way up in the top of the pigeon-house, which was Speckie's favorite. It certainly was desirable; so I flew up to it at once, and cooed to everyone I was taking possession. Bluey was watching me from his roost. He now had more cause than ever to dislike me, for not only had he been whipped, but he had also lost a possible mate; so he at once flew away to tell Speckie about it.

"I was so busy cooing and turning around on the roost I paid no attention. Soon Speckie flew up to a place near by, and called out a warning to me. I promptly defied him.

"That is my roost,' he said.

"That *was* your roost,' I corrected, 'but it is now mine. You still claim six others, but I expect later to take one of those also. You do not need so many. I have come here to live and have taken a mate, and now I mean to have two nice roosts. I probably shall also take some of your houses,' I added, boastfully.

"This was too much for him. 'Get off that roost!' he commanded.

"I guess not. It's mine now,' I repeated, busily turning around on it.

"He flew over nearer, warning me again. I paid no attention, but continued to coo forth

my rights. Then he jumped over to where I stood. He tried to grab and throw me off, but I hit him with my wing. It was a hard blow and he retreated to the other end. Then we cooed at each other for a full minute. Soon he came towards me again. I kept close to the eaves, for I was taking no unnecessary risks. We slapped each other several times, but with no results.

"Then my chance came. I grabbed him by the neck feathers and slowly forced him off the roost, just as I had Bluey. He flew at once to each of his remaining perches, and cooed on them in turn to let everyone know they were still his. Then he went to his six houses, and cooed excitedly on the stoop of each.

"Meanwhile I was cooing over my new property, so all would recognize it now as mine. Triumphant I called down to my wife, who had been watching us from the ground, to come up. We cuddled down close to each other, and I patted her cheek with my bill. Then singing softly far down in my throat a sad, sweet love song to let her know how much I loved her, I fell asleep.

"The next morning, when we had finished our breakfast, my wife came up to me, and putting her face to mine, whispered in my ear:

“‘Dear Questions, you are so good to me I hate to ask you to do anything more; but this is something I want *awfully*.’

“‘And what is that, White Love? You know I will do anything for such a dear little wife,’ I cooed.

“‘O, Questions!’ she laughed, much pleased; ‘I don’t know which you can do better—fight for me, or say pretty things to me. But’—and here her head came close to mine once more—‘I do want one of those houses to build a nest in, and I would especially like that corner one just below the end of our roost. Do you suppose you can get it for me?’

“Now a grown-up is naturally strong, but when he has something worth fighting for, as I had, he is doubly strong; so I assured her she should have the one she liked best. She thanked me, gently smoothing down my neck feathers with her bill. I suggested we should exercise a little first, however; so flying out through the small door, we started off towards the woods. I tried to prolong the trip, for one must think hard sometimes. I was indeed puzzled over the best way to get the house White Love had selected, for it was one of the six Speckie claimed. But my wife had set her heart on it, so at last I flew boldly back.

“Speckie, who was busy sitting on some eggs while Mrs. Speckie was out taking the air, saw me at once, and watched me suspiciously. I flew cautiously down to the stoop of the house my wife had selected. ‘It is the female’s place to choose, and the male’s place to procure,’ I tried to encourage myself; for I very much wanted to be friends with the birds I had come to live with, and I felt I had already created sufficient disturbance. However, it must be done; so I began to coo from the stoop where I was standing.

“At once Speckie’s head came through his door; but he could not come out, as he must keep the eggs warm, whatever happened. He did not even coo; but I could see he was awfully mad. This gave me an idea, so I walked quickly into the house and looked around. It was new and clean, and just the right size. I cooed a little to convince myself it was really mine; then went to the stoop, and called my wife to come and see if it pleased her.

“‘O, this is lovely!’ she said, as she joined me inside; and her feminine eye quickly took in all its possibilities. ‘Our own little home,’ and she sat down in a corner with her tail pressed against the wall, and her face turned up to mine.

"I sat down beside her, and again breathed softly my love song, sung deep down in my throat as before; and sometimes she would join in the chorus. We were so happy we stayed there for hours, forgetting everything else. At last I remembered Speckie; and, realizing that as soon as Mrs. Speckie returned he would come to our home to make trouble, I suggested we go out and fly around a little before supper.

"While we were eating, Speckie came up and said, 'If I catch you in my house again, I will throw you out.'

"Of course I laughed, for you see it would not be pigeon etiquette for him to fight me unless I was actually on his property at the time; and if I used it only when he was on the eggs he could never catch me. This was the bright idea that had come to me in the morning. After supper we flew up to our roost and no one tried to molest us, for it now belonged to me.

"The next morning my wife wanted to commence building our nest at once; but I insisted her health required plenty of fresh air and she must take a short fly at least, to which she consented reluctantly. My real object, however, was to wait until Speckie was settled on the eggs. Just as my wife was urging me to fly back home,

I saw Mrs. Speckie below on the ground, and I knew then we would be safe for the rest of the day.

“There were plenty of straws and twigs lying about, and we carried them one at a time into the house, in our mouths. Later I found a piece of string, which pleased my wife very much. Speckie followed our movements closely, and made many threats; but, as before, he could not leave the eggs.

“We both worked hard all day, and by sunset the nest was nearly finished. The next morning, as soon as Speckie was out of our way, we went at the nest again; and long before it was time for Mrs. Speckie to return, it was all completed, and we were off again for a fly. We had no fear Speckie would destroy our nest, for that would not be pigeon etiquette either; and we never do anything against our unwritten laws. He saw me again at supper, and made a few insolent remarks; but I could afford to laugh this time, for my plan was working well.

“One afternoon White Love urged me to go off for a long fly, and said she would keep house alone. She had never asked me to leave her before, and it troubled me very much. I wondered if she were already getting tired of

me; but as she insisted, I went. I flew a long distance, but planned to get back before Speckie could leave his nest. I did not care to have my wife unprotected when he was free; though probably we had nothing more to fear from him.

"As I reached the stoop of our house, my wife called excitedly: 'O, Questions, come quickly!'

"I thought at once of Speckie, and my heart began to beat fast, as I wondered what could have happened. I entered hastily, and there in the nest lay the dearest little pigeon egg I had ever seen—so white, and round, and warm. I put my ear down and listened, but there was no baby in it yet.

"My wife laughed at me. 'You silly creature! it has been laid only an hour.'

"'Well, I will sit on it for you now, White Love,' I offered, anxious to play some part in the matter.

"'Indeed you will not,' she replied, emphatically. 'I will sit on it myself to-night; but if you will promise to be very careful, perhaps I will let you keep it warm a while to-morrow.'

"I kissed her gently, and told her she should have her own way about it. But just then the doorway was darkened; and looking up, I saw

Speckie standing there. I had entirely forgotten him in my happiness. He was so angry he could hardly speak. I was terribly afraid for our egg; and with a half-uttered coo I sprang at his neck feathers, and grabbing him, shoved him with all my strength back through the door and off the stoop. He could not put up as good a fight as when he tried to keep the roost from me, for he knew in his heart the house was now mine.

“He fell to the ground; and I, still holding him fast, fell with him. We were neither of us hurt; but I determined to punish Speckie so thoroughly, he would always let us alone in the future. So I beat him with my wings and shook him with my bill, till he begged for mercy. I made him promise to behave, and to give me another house and roost; then let him go. He flew up to one of his houses, cooed a little, then sat quietly on its stoop till supper time. I knew now my home was safe, and hastened back to tell White Love she need worry no more.

“The next morning I flew quickly down from my roost to see that all was well with my wife. She insisted I should leave her on the nest till noon, and then I could take her place. I acquiesced, for I do believe our wives know better

how to raise children than we do; though where they learned it, I cannot imagine.

"All that afternoon I watched carefully over what, in a few weeks, would be my first-born. But the next forenoon when I went to the nest to relieve White Love, there was another round, white, and warm little egg, so like the other I could not tell them apart—though White Love said she could easily.

"And now we were indeed happy, and I loved my little wife more than ever. I was so very careful of the eggs, I was allowed to sit on them for several hours each day, while White Love went out for food and exercise. But nights she would trust no one on the nest but herself. And so time flew by, till more than two weeks had passed.

"One morning I went in as usual to sit. 'I must not leave the nest to-day,' White Love said, 'for I can hear our babies moving in the eggs, and they will soon be coming out of their shells now.'

"I put my head down, and I, too, could hear them. I kissed her gently and went out to the stoop. I decided to stay around, for I might be needed. But after a while I grew tired of waiting, and thought I would take a short fly.

"I went farther than I intended, and it was getting late when I returned. There in the nest lay two squirming, ugly little masses of flesh, which even I could not call pretty; but I loved them dearly, for they were mine. I took the broken shells out of the nest, so the babies would not get cut. I had already mixed the wheat I had eaten with some milk which I had prepared in my stomach purposely for them; and as they were now crying for food, I put my bill down into theirs and fed them, just as Father had fed me. Then I flew up to my roost, leaving White Love to keep the babies warm while they slept.

"One day, a certain small boy with Mother Dear climbed up to our house and looked in. The babies were only a few days old, and for one awful moment my heart was in my mouth; for I remembered other babies—and humans coming to their nests. But I need not have feared; for they only watched our children lovingly a few moments, and then went quietly away. They came often after that, but we were never afraid again. Indeed, White Love was too proud for anything; but then, one couldn't blame her.

"And so the babies grew, and I told them stories about the big world outside. Later we taught them how to eat and fly; and when

they were large enough to leave the nest, we helped them select a nice roost, and showed them how to claim it for their own. We have had babies twice since, but not one of them has disappeared, and we are all one big, happy family.

"So you see pigeons know trouble, care, and happiness as well as you humans. You have made life easy and pleasant for us here; but often I think of those in the bird city, and wish they, too, could have a Laddie to care for them. I now believe most humans mean to be kind, and only those are cruel who have never learned to *watch* and *listen* as you have, Laddie; and for them I feel nothing but pity.

"And now, good-bye, boy; and remember you have a great deal of love—pigeon-love."

Gayly chattering to the clattering
Of the brown nut downward pattering,
Leap the squirrels, red and gray;
Drop the apples red and yellow,
Drop the russet pears and mellow,
Drop the red leaves all the day.

RUSKIN.



Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good;
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastimes and our happiness will grow.

WORDSWORTH.

THE BIG LESSON

AND now summer—the long, happy summer—was quite gone, and October was here. Laddie, always exceedingly sensitive to beautiful colors, had been reveling in the rich shades of reds and yellows which the leaves had everywhere flaunted in his face. Some of the most gorgeous specimens he had carefully laid aside, and then Mother Dear had shown him how to press them, and in that way he had learned to know the trees they belonged to by the shapes of the leaves alone.

And then had come the gathering of the nuts. The chestnuts especially had kept him busy, for they seemed to have a habit of dropping into the most unexpected places. But each time, when the leaves were kicked aside, or pushed away with a stick—and who would suppose old, crinkled leaves could make such a swish and rustle—he was sure to find, lying quietly at the very bottom as though hiding from him, some big brown fellows to add to his store. Early in

the morning he used to start for the trees to see just how many Jack Frost had sent down to him in the night. But he found he was not the only one Mr. Frost was being good to, and soon it became a race to see whether he or the squirrels would be able to gather the most. They certainly had sharp eyes—far sharper than his.

But one day The Giant had explained how hard the squirrels had to work in order to find enough nuts to fill their storehouses for the long winter coming, and at such a time sharp eyes were needed. Laddie had not thought of the nuts being required for food, and resolved in future to share his portion with them; and so, after the pleasure of the search through the leaves—which he did not feel called upon to give up—he would hold nut after nut out temptingly towards the little creatures. Of course the squirrels had long ago studied Laddie and talked him over among themselves, and of course they had decided he was to be trusted; and so it was not long before a real friendship between them was started.

And soon there was a daily game of hide and seek, when the boy would stretch himself on the ground, and his new friends would race up and down his body in search of hidden stores. They

would look down his neck, dive into all of his pockets, and search in all sorts of unlikely places; and it was indeed difficult for Laddie to hide a nut on his person that would not sooner or later be discovered. And then each time the finder would scamper away to put it safely in a storehouse, or if in too much of a hurry, he would bury it temporarily in a place where the earth was soft, and cover the spot very carefully with leaves. What useful little things those claws were—good for many other things than climbing.

Occasionally when one was real hungry, he would sit up straight on Laddie's shoulder, rip off the toughest shell with his sharp teeth, and then eat the dainty morsel within. The boy would hardly breathe at such a time, for fear he might disturb the pretty creature. O, yes, they had other things full as sharp as their eyes! It was all a game of which he never tired, and, apparently, neither did the squirrels.

As the nuts became scarcer, Laddie became more generous with his supplies, fearing the storehouses were not quite full yet. He felt he could afford to be generous, for he remembered the corn which was to be popped later hanging in the shed, and the walnuts and butternuts already spread out on the attic floor to dry, and

apples—barrels of them—in the cellar. O, it had all been great fun, and there was more yet ahead!

But that was the way it had looked last week. To-day Laddie stood on the porch watching a carriage disappearing from sight with O, *such* a woe-begone face! It was no longer the sweet, lovable, sunshiny one his friends knew so well; and all because the Old Doctor, who had been spending a few days at the farm, had given him some new medicine to take. This medicine was only a few words of advice—as much of his medicine was likely to be—but Laddie had not taken to it a bit kindly. If the Old Doctor must give advice, why couldn't he give the pleasant kind as he had done in the spring, and not such bitter stuff, that left a horrid taste in the mouth, and quite ruined the temper? But still it must be taken. Daddie and Mother Dear had left no doubt in the lad's mind as to that, though he had argued the matter warmly with them.

And now he supposed all his good times here were at an end. Indeed, he didn't believe there would ever be any more good times. He knew his heart was broken, for he could feel the pieces shaking and quivering inside him, and it made him fairly sick. He certainly thought he had

come here to live; and now, just as he was beginning to feel really settled, along comes the Old Doctor, and says he must leave it. And worst of all, Daddie and Mother Dear agreed with him. What good were doctors anyway? He guessed he knew what country life had done for him. You couldn't tell him he wasn't better off here than in the city.

Laddie pulled the collar of his sweater more closely about his throat, for it seemed rather chilly doing nothing. And how still everything was. One would think the whole farm had gone to sleep. Funny he hadn't noticed it before. Well, he guessed he would go and tell his trouble to a few of his friends, and that would help some. How sorry they would all be!

He paused a moment at the big flower-garden. Only a few of the very hardiest plants were even trying to hold up their heads. The rest had all been nipped by the big frost of last week, and the place which had been a mass of color all summer and the pride of Mother Dear's heart, now looked desolate indeed. Laddie told himself it all looked just as he felt—and then he swallowed hard.

He tried to count the birds' nests which now stood out conspicuously in shrubs, bushes, and

trees. There seemed to be so many now the leaves were off so one could see them. How he wished he had known where they were in the summer; but now it was too late, for they were all empty—every one.

He wondered how his friend Mrs. Toad would take the news. He had not seen her for some time, as he had been so very busy with other things; but now he decided to look her up, and he turned his steps towards his garden. That was another desolate spot, for all the vegetables had been gathered long before, and not even a pumpkin was left. As Laddie had cleared much of the rubbish away—he had had one glorious bonfire—he knew it would be a comparatively easy thing to find her if she were about; but not a sign of her could he discover. Probably she had already buried herself for her winter's nap; for there had been several quite cold days, and all the mornings and evenings were pretty chilly now.

However, it was useless to search for her any longer, so he decided to go and tell the Old Lady how unhappy he was. She, at least, would be awake. But when he found her, perched on a box in a corner sheltered from the wind and where the sun shone warmly, it gave him little

comfort; for her eyes were shut tight. Laddie greeted her in his usual friendly manner, but there was no response. He begged her to listen to him, for he was in trouble, and perhaps she, a hen of many summers, might advise him; but to all of his pleadings she answered never a word.

Well then—stifling his disappointment and chagrin—he would go and find Questions, who had never been known to let a chance to converse slip by. But at the pigeon-pen he fared no better. Questions was there, to be sure; but to Laddie's invitation and entreaty alike he remained adamant.

"Can't you see I'm busy?" he called, impatiently. "If *you* had a family on your hands, you wouldn't have so much time for visiting." And off he flew.

Well, perhaps he had better go into the barn and try to find Dainty Maid. They had been fast friends from the first, and he had soon become as fond of her babies as she was herself. He had learned much while watching the training of those children, and he had often assured Dainty Maid many of her ways made him think of Mother Dear. All mothers were different from other folks. He was firmly convinced of that.

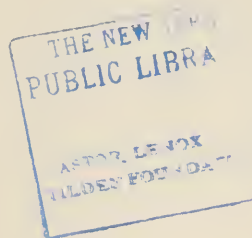
Yes, a good friend like Dainty Maid would

understand his trouble at once, and her sympathy would be very welcome to-day. But at the head of the stairs he was stopped abruptly. "Go away!" called Dainty Maid, crouching before a small hole. "O dear, Laddie! I should have had that mouse if you hadn't frightened him away by your noise. I have been waiting for him ever so long too. Do go away!" Sadly Laddie wended his way down the stairs. What was the matter with all of his friends to-day? he wondered. Why, no one seemed to be in sympathy with him any more.

The boy glanced over at the beehives, but he saw nothing to induce him to go any nearer. He supposed the bees also had gone to sleep. Happy Days was beginning to be rather lonesome, he was afraid. Well, he knew what he'd do. He'd go over and see The Giant. His heart grew lighter at the very thought. There was one friend who would always stand by him.

He lingered a moment on the bridge which crossed the brook. He had never seen the stream so high before. It had been slowly rising ever since the recent rains, but to-day it was a rushing torrent. And see! the rocks—his undiscovered lands of last summer—which had always been perfectly dry, were entirely sub-





merged. He doubted whether he would be allowed to wade in the brook now, even if it were not too cold, for he could hardly expect to stand against such force as that water was displaying. All the summer, the brook had been a friend and playmate; but this was some stranger—one he knew not, and one that struck a chill to his heart. How black and cruel that water did look rushing along, and tumbling over itself in its haste! And, yes, it was still singing; but it sounded now like a war-song.

He hastened away, anxious to erase the unpleasant picture. This time he would go straight to The Giant—and that, after all, was what he should have done at first. Of all his friends, The Giant was the dearest; for somehow he always understood. And to-day a friend like that was needed, if ever. O, there he was! waiting, Laddie liked to think, for him. It was a relief to find him still standing there, and appearing to be the same dear old friend. Of course he had not really expected The Giant had gone away, or had changed; but one never could tell, for things were strange to-day—very.

“Hello, dear Giant!” he called in greeting. And then he waited anxiously. *Would* he be answered?

"Hello, Laddie dear! Pretty lonesome here for you these days, isn't it?"

At the sympathizing words Laddie's eyes swam, and sobs choked him for a moment.

"How did you know? But of course you would, you know so much. O, dear Giant! I want you to tell me what to do. The Old Doctor has been here, and says I must go back to the city to live. I must go right away—next week; and I—don't—want—to—go—one—bit."

"O, ho!" laughed The Giant. "So the Great Change has come to you too? I was wondering if it would, and how."

"The Great Change? I am afraid I don't know what you mean?"

"Twice a year the Great Change comes to all Nature's children. In the spring it wakes us up; really wakes us, you know. We then begin to put on new feathers, new leaves, new life. It is our happy time. The Great Change came to you, too, Laddie, last spring. It woke *you* up and put new life in you. It was your happy time as well as ours. You mustn't forget that. What fun we have had this summer, haven't we, boy? No one can take the remembrance of all those good times and nice stories away from us—ever. And when you get back to

the city, won't you have fun remembering it all?"

"But I don't want to remember it in the city. I want to stay right here and remember it," muttered Laddie, rebelliously. "I never had such a good time in my life before. But now it is all over, and I must go back to that horrid place."

"Yes," chuckled The Giant, "it is the Great Change surely. Why, it has me too. I have been very busy for weeks getting all my buds formed for next year's leaves; but I mustn't let them grow now, for the cold weather would soon kill them. So I won't send them up any food, but instead we will soon all go to sleep—the baby buds and I—and then some day the sun will call to us: 'Hello there, Giant! Time to wake up!' And all the snow and cold will be gone, and it will be spring. O, yes, the Great Change has come to me! It came to Mrs. Toad, and the Old Lady, and all of us. It came to Miss Apis, too," he added, softly. "O, the Change is a fine thing, Laddie, when one really understands it! And now, it has come to you."

"I wish you would tell me just what you mean."

"I mean only this—too much sugar is bad for anyone. No, listen!" he said seriously, as Laddie moved impatiently, "I truly think you have had enough sugar or play for a while, and so you need a change. Now the birds needed another kind of change. Last summer, you remember, they used to work all day long getting food for their babies—and there always seemed to be babies, didn't there? And now they are having their playtime. And even Mrs. Toad needed a rest, for she would not want to catch bugs the year 'round, I am sure. And the Old Lady—why she is just as happy sitting there in the sun with her eyes closed, thinking about her precious Plymouth Rock babies, as she was last summer in worrying about them. O, a change is a good thing for us all! Even Miss Apis was ready for it, you know," he reminded the boy. "Everyone ready for it but you, Laddie. How is that?"

"I don't know," replied the lad, breathing hard. "I only know I don't want to go from the happiest place in the world, and leave all the friends I love so dearly."

"But most of the friends have already left you. And I never heard one of them make any fuss about it," rebukingly. "Now, then, suppose you tell me all about it."

"Well, the Old Doctor—he started the whole thing. He came to the farm a few days ago when no one was expecting him. At least I don't think anyone was. He said he was taking a vacation. I was glad, as I had always liked him—he gave me Dickum, you know—and I was just as nice to him as I could be. Why, I took him all over the place, and told him about everything. He seemed to like it almost as well as I did."

"I know. I saw you."

"Well, yesterday he said he would be leaving soon, and he thought he had better give me a little attention first. Then he poked me, and pounded me, and after he had nearly turned me wrong side out, he said I was as sound as a dollar. I was a credit to him. And then—" Laddie swallowed, "he said it would be better for me not to stay here this winter. There would be many bad storms and much snow when I could not get out at all; and I ought to be in school now, anyway, with other boys. And there was no reason why Daddie should neglect his business any longer for me, and Mother Dear naturally would be glad to see her friends again, and—. O, I don't know!—he said a lot more, but I'm afraid I didn't listen much. I had heard

enough. I did not want to leave here and go back to the city, and I said so. O, I guess I was pretty naughty—maybe wicked—I don't know! I made everyone look sad, and seem awfully disappointed in me. But I didn't care. I am sure I shall hate school. Probably I'll get sick again at once. I never could keep well in the city. But then they'll have to bring me back, so that will not be so bad. *Won't* you be glad to see me, though, Giant?"

But The Giant apparently did not hear the question.

"And so the Old Doctor has gone?"

"Yes, and everybody made a big fuss over his going, and even Dickum has gone to the station to see him off. But before he left I guess I showed him just what I thought of him. Why, do you know, I would not even shake hands with him!"

The Giant shook his head. "I think, myself, he has not left you here long enough."

"There, now! I knew you would understand the whole matter. I just wish Daddie and Mother Dear would listen to you."

"No, you have not been here nearly long enough. Who would think," The Giant continued softly, as though speaking to himself,

"that a bright boy like Laddie would learn so slowly. *I'm* much disappointed in him too."

"O, Giant! Dear Giant! Do tell me what you mean—quickly!"

"Why, I mean you have not learned the A-B-C of the Big Lesson yet."

"O, dear! Have I a Big Lesson to learn? I don't like lessons a bit, and a Big Lesson will be very hard, I am sure. And is that why I must go to school?"

"Yes, you must go to school, though not to the kind you mean, perhaps; for I am speaking of the Big School—the School of Life. Why, everything at Happy Days has already learned the Big Lesson but you, for no one and no thing can be happy and contented until it is learned. It isn't such an awfully hard one, either; for it means only learning *to make the most of everything*—the most of what you are, what you have, and where you are placed.

"Suppose Mrs. Toad had refused to catch bugs because she was a toad instead of a bird, where would your garden have been? Even the Old Lady was perfectly satisfied to be a fat, clumsy Plymouth Rock instead of a pretty, graceful White Leghorn. You know how she did her duty against great odds. And you remember

Miss Apis never bemoaned her fate because she was not a Mother Bee, but worked on till the last. And so everywhere we find happiness and contentment—everywhere except in humans. O, Laddie, it is well called the Big Lesson!

“You know the small tree that grows in such a funny way up there on the big rock? Well, *there* is a lesson for you! I know, for I stood right here and watched it all. One day when the wind was very boisterous he commenced to blow a seed-baby around, and when at last he tired of his sport, he dropped it right on that rock. Now suppose that seed-baby had said: ‘I can’t do anything here on a rock, and I shan’t try. This is no place for a tree.’ But no! She said: ‘What a big rock this is! And how warmly the sun shines upon it! And see! Here is a bit of nice, rich soil. I think *I’ll* try to grow.’

“And so she did her best, and soon a tiny shoot appeared. But she was not satisfied merely to be alive, so she kept right on growing until she became a tree. Not as large as I, of course, but as large as it was possible for *her* to be. And when she became puzzled as to how to fasten her toes firmly in the ground, she decided

to *split the rock*. If you asked her, I am sure she would tell you a rock is a splendid place on which to grow. She, Laddie, has learned the Big Lesson; and as no other lesson is nearly so important, I think you should be allowed to stay right here until you learn it. Probably Daddie and Mother Dear thought you already knew it; but the tiniest thing can teach it to you, if you are really anxious to learn."

"Do you think it will take me long, dear Giant?" It was a very meek Laddie who asked the question. There was occasion for meekness when the lowliest creatures had learned well what he, Laddie, had not learned at all.

"That depends entirely upon yourself. You have learned much to-day. It is a good beginning."

"Could I learn it in the city just as well as here?"

"O, yes! you can learn it *anywhere*, if you will. That is one of the nice things about Life's School. You can study wherever you are. But are you thinking of going back to the city?"

"Yes—next week," Laddie replied, without a tremor.

“That’s right!” and his big old heart danced with joy. “I guess the Old Doctor knew best after all, didn’t he? I thought for a few minutes you were going to prove yourself a weakling. But you’re not. You’re strong, dear child—really strong. And just think of all the things you, a *boy*, can learn; for there will be many lessons, easy and hard, in school and out, waiting for you. And all the time you will be learning the Big Lesson too. Think of what it means to have Daddie and Mother Dear belong to you, and *make the most of it*. Think of what it means to be well and strong, and *make the most of it*. Think of what it means to love everything beautiful—beautiful people, beautiful books and pictures, beautiful deeds and lives—and *make the most of it*. This is the foundation you already have to build on; and, Laddie, if you keep at it, all the time, I am sure the Big Lesson will come easy to you. You *have* made the most of the months here, and happiness and health came as the result. And if you go back to your old home, and work hard in school, making the most of everything, I *know* happiness and contentment will follow. But what a sermon I have been preaching!

I think I *had* better go to sleep.—But you will try, won't you, boy?"

"Yes; indeed I will! I never thought about all this before. What a dear, wise Giant you are! How I wish I could take you back with me!"

"No, thank you!" laughed The Giant. "I prefer to stay right here. This is where my work lies; and I mustn't neglect that, you know. But I will be waiting for you next spring. Why, spring is *only* a few months away, Laddie; and then I will put on a new, green suit for you, and *maybe* I will have a new story to tell you."

"O, next spring! It *seems* an awfully long time, doesn't it? But I will try to be good and remember all you have said. To prove it, I'm going to ask Mother Dear to help me write a note to the Old Doctor to say how sorry I am. I think I will go right in and do it now."

"O, yes, Laddie! I think the Big Lesson will come easy. Of course there will be hard days, but who wants easy days all the time? And think of all you'll have to tell us next summer about this winter's work. And how eagerly we will all listen to you! for everyone here loves Laddie, and will always be interested in every-

thing that he does. Now remember, when the next Great Change comes, we will all be here, early—old friends and new—looking and waiting for you. And so, good-bye, Laddie—till spring-time!”

A youth to whom was given
So much of earth, so much of heaven.
WORDSWORTH.



And say to mothers what a holy charge
Is theirs—with what a kingly power their love
Might rule the fountains of the new-born mind.
MRS. SIGOURNEY.





